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**The usage, understanding and theology of the daily Office amongst Anglican clergy today**

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**The usage, understanding and theology of  
the daily Office amongst Anglican clergy  
today**

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## **Abstract**

The Office is a form of daily prayer which all clergy are required to say by Canon law. Many writers suggest the present situation is one of crisis although it has never been established what proportion of clergy do or do not fulfil the requirement. This research project is based on a questionnaire completed by 270 clergy of the Church of England and explores the present usage and understanding of the clergy with regard to the formal daily prayer of the Church. Whilst the number praying the Office is higher than might be expected there is also significant variety of usage and understanding which points to a lack of information about the Office communicated by the Church at the point of training. The history of the Office is explored with a new suggestion made about its origins. Likewise other liturgical, psychological and professional contexts are explored. Out of these a proposal is then made to enable a clearer understanding of the rationale and possibilities of the Office in the light of the increased flexibility provided for it now by Common Worship. A draft of this proposal was piloted to a sample of clergy and was well received. In addition a more comprehensive theology is proposed here for the prayer itself and the Institution of the Church challenged to improve what is presented about the Office to those in training and those already in ministry. The aim here is to facilitate both the institution of the Church and individual clergy a richer and fuller understanding of the form, content and theology of the prayer so that the possibilities of the Office as a prayer of personal and ministerial transformation as well as one of obligation can inspire and empower the clergy afresh.

# Table of Contents

Abstract .....	2
Table of Contents .....	3
Acknowledgements .....	5
Chapter 1 Introduction .....	6
Chapter 2 Methodological Matters .....	11
2.1 Epistemology and Ontological Assumptions .....	11
2.2 Language and Theology .....	16
2.3 Priesthood and Humanity .....	19
2.4 Experience and Scripture .....	20
2.5 Reading and Friendship .....	22
2.6 The Ethos of Anglicanism .....	25
2.7 Summary .....	26
Chapter 3 Contexts and Contents .....	30
3.1 Context: The Story of the Office So Far .....	30
3.1.1 The People's Office .....	34
3.1.2 The Prayer of Monasticism .....	36
3.1.3 The Cathedral Office .....	38
3.1.4 The Clerical Office .....	39
3.1.5 The Prayer of the People .....	40
3.1.6 Recent Developments .....	41
3.2 Contents .....	43
3.2.1 Hymnody .....	43
3.2.2 Psalmody and antiphons .....	44
3.2.3 Scripture .....	46
3.2.4 Canticles .....	48
3.2.5 Versicles, Lord's Prayer and Collects .....	49
3.2.6 Confession and Creeds .....	51
3.2.7 Intercessions .....	51
3.2.8 Silence .....	52
3.2.9 Rubrics .....	55
3.3 Context: Matters Psychological, Liturgical and Professional .....	57
3.3.1 Matters Psychological .....	57
3.3.2 Matters Liturgical .....	61
3.3.3 Matters Professional .....	63
Chapter 4 Data Exposition .....	67
4.1 Research Strategy.....	67
4.2 Questionnaire and Response.....	69
Chapter 5 Data Interrogation .....	99
5.1 Public and Private .....	101
5.2 The Evangelical Perspective .....	105
5.3 Formation and Training .....	110

5.4 Defining an Office .....	116
5.4.1 Wonder and Praise .....	119
5.4.2 Scripture and the Transforming Knowledge of God .....	120
5.4.3 Engagement with the World and Intercession .....	122
5.4.4 Duty and Joy .....	123
5.4.5 Conclusion .....	125
Chapter 6 An Office for the future? .....	127
6.1 An Office for the future?.....	127
6.2 Pilot.....	132
6.3 Discussion.....	133
6.4 The Logophatic Office.....	142
6.5 An Addition.....	146
6.6 Conclusion.....	150
Chapter 7 Conclusion .....	152
7.1The Usage, Understanding and Theology of the Daily Office amongst Anglican Clergy.	152
7.1.1 Usage .....	152
7.1.2 Understanding .....	153
7.1.3 Theology .....	153
7.2 Critiquing the Research Process .....	154
7.3 Where Next – Afterword .....	161
Reference List .....	164
Appendices .....	172
1. Matters Psychological.....	172
2. King's Statement.....	173
3. Questionnaire.....	174
4. An Office for the future?.....	179

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

*I introduce the personal and professional reasons behind the research topic of the daily Office, and the existing literature on the subject.*

The manager of a religious bookshop in a cathedral city in the south of England observed a while back that every June, just after the diocesan retreat for those about to be ordained had ended, being usually the day before the ordination service itself, there was a flurry of visits to the shop on the part of some of the ordinands, each asking for an explanation about ‘this thing they had just heard about called the divine Office’ and for some resources to tell them about it. ‘Apparently it’s important but we haven’t been told about it before’ being a typical example of what is said to the staff of the shop.

Why such ignorance? I asked myself, for my story with the Office has been very different. I began praying the daily Office whilst I was a lay person: it was Morning and Evening Prayer from the Roman Breviary and I happen to know the date I began: November 12<sup>th</sup>, 1981. Since that time the Office has been a staple of my spirituality, through the vagaries of secular employment, selection for Ordination, training, and a variety of parishes and jobs since. In different contexts I have found myself using the full Roman Breviary with the Office of Readings and Compline included, that from *The Book of Common Prayer* and from the Franciscan Daily Office and *Common Worship*. From 1983 to 1998 I nearly always said the Office in company, usually with at least two to four people also present and often more. This was a major advantage to recognising the collegial and ecclesial nature of the Office although there was never a difficulty for me in saying it privately on days off or times away. Since 1998 I have said it alone and at home, except for approximately every other week attending a

shared saying of the Morning Office from *Common Worship* with other local clergy – a coming together and a sharing I value. At home I say Morning Prayer pretty much on awakening and last thing at night I pray Compline – the former pegged to my first cup of tea, the latter when finding myself in bed.

This means my present daily diet of scripture, apart from selected psalmody, is weak. The Roman Office relies on the Office of Readings and a pre-supposition of daily Mass to counter that, although in this present parish, as in my last, celebrating the Eucharist and receiving communion occurs at most a couple of times a week. On the other hand, times of silence can be easily incorporated and intercession is much more a part of the prayer. Running alongside this form of the daily Office for me is the regular use of the prayer of the Examen and a brief period of informal and more extempore intercession. Overall, looking back, I could say my own experience of the Office falls into two phases. The first saw the Office far more in its communal manifestation – prayed with others, seen very much as part of the wider prayer of the Church, in a form and pattern that wasn't necessarily my choice or adapted to my circumstances but to which I was committed, with any of the few lapses a matter for the confessional or for reporting to my spiritual director. The second phase saw the Office become far more private than public, never sung or spoken aloud, and experienced as mainly a part of my personal journey of faith and an ingredient in my on-going and unfolding formation as a priest in active ministry. Over the years this recitation and encounter has become an ever more vital matter, arising not as originally from commitment and will and offering (so something I did for the Church or for God because that was what clergy did) but now out of desire and choice and need (something I feel I have and want to do, something that arises from the fact that I personally here receive what I need to to get by and get on).



By way of contrast, in talking with some clergy friends I have been struck by how many no longer said the Office or found it of any apparent creative use. I was also very taken aback when addressing a gathering of ordinands on the subject of prayer to be contradicted in my account of the daily Office by the Diocesan representative present, who said he did not find it relevant or useful and so it should be a matter of choice rather than obligation for those going forward to ordination. This in spite of the fact that the saying of the Office is an obligation placed upon the clergy by Canon Law. This obligation is as true for Anglicans as for the Church of Rome and the Churches of the East and it has been the case for centuries (Semple, 1967). But I too have not generally been obedient to Canon Law since my more recent practice is to pray the Office at home and not, as directed, publicly in church: I seem to have travelled far from the apparent ideal of the communal and public prayer of the whole body of Christ. Any chance of complacency that might arise from my regular saying of the Office could be easily dispelled by this departure from the apparent ideal and also by the recognition of how much the Church herself has changed with regard to the Office – I can remember my first confessor, a retired priest and liturgical scholar, recalling the days when the Office could be said in advance, for example a week's worth said in one fell swoop to clear the diary before time away. One writer on the Office (French, 2008, p.21) suggests the analogy of prayer as food with the suggestion that the clergy, rather than indulging in two or three square meals a day, had moved now to daily occasional snacks supplemented by a very large Sunday intake. In fact my experience might be more that some clergy seem to be on an exclusion diet whilst others have a habit of daily grazing. Neither is always particularly healthy, although both groups may perhaps indulge in occasional binges at times of retreat or pilgrimage. Another more recent factor

is the provision for the Office made now in *Common Worship*, the Church of England's latest liturgical resource and guide dating from 2000. Earey quotes an ordinand grappling with the various provisions made in *Common Worship* for daily prayer as saying, 'it all seems so exclusive, as if you have to belong to some elite club to be able to have the secret key to unlock this stuff.' (2013, p.4). Finally, the results or effects of praying the Office seem unclear or insufficiently consistent, though one bishop I spoke to commented that he could always tell when interviewing the clergy which of them said the Office and which did not (Baines, 2012).

In turning to the literature on the subject I was struck by the sense of crisis or of gloom that tended to be imparted about the present situation. The main writers I have used on the subject all communicate this in different ways. Bradshaw comprehensively reviews the daily prayer of the early church and the intricacies of eastern and western manifestations as well as the interplay between what he terms the 'Cathedral Office' on the one hand and that pertaining to the 'Monastic' on the other. He concludes by speaking of the need to 'rescue the divine office from the oblivion into which it is in real danger of falling in many churches.' (1981, p.154). Guiver also reviews the history of the Office and the tensions arising from the influence and content of the Monastic Office over against the different needs and ingredients of what he calls the Office of the People. He largely judges the state of the office today against its public celebration and speaks of the possibility that the Anglican tradition of the daily Office may not survive the next few years (1988, p.195). Campbell on the other hand offers a masterly insight into the process of reform of the Roman Office that took place between 1964 and 1971. He speaks of the compromises that arose from an inability to make a more radical break with the forms and mentality of the recent past. Because of this,

Rome continues to offer an Office focused on the private recitation of daily prayer by secular clergy with pastoral responsibilities, rather than anything more corporate and more broad, and its restrictions seem to tend to produce ennui rather than on-going inspiration. This leaves in his view the need for 'imaginative implementation of the given structures together with unofficial development of new structures' to enable something more 'felicitous' (1995, p.285). Finally Woolfenden has explored the lost liturgical and sacramental aspects of the daily Office, through study of the Mozarabic rites and the wider origins of the Office across the Christian world. He speaks of the need for further and greater reform in all the traditions present in this country 'so that modern Western European Christians may one day, hopefully, have the opportunity to celebrate again the new life of the risen Christ in daily communal, even family prayer' (2000, p.163). That there seem many contradictory factors comprising the church's understanding and experience of the Divine Office may not therefore be surprising, given the unconscious influence of so many varied and often contradictory factors playing out in and through the history and development of the Office as we have come to know it. Different generations and different parts of the Church have necessarily found their own emphasis and expression. Is there though a crisis? What proportion of clergy use the daily Office? How do they pray it if so? What do they think they are about? What are the communal and private aspects in play? What part might background or training play? Is reform needed? If so, of what kind? My conclusion was that empirical investigation was needed, and so this research question was conceived.

## Chapter 2 Methodological Matters

*In this chapter I explore the epistemological and ontological background to the research and, in the light of this, unpack matters of language, priesthood, experience, friendship and the ethos of being an Anglican.*

### 2.1 Epistemology and Ontological Assumptions

In the light of all this, what precisely did I think I wanted to find out – and how – and what could be found out and what of the challenges this particular clerical demographic might well present?

I recognised the tendency I have myself immediately to delete generic or impersonal emails that arrive in my inbox and to resist any invitation to access an online survey and attempt to complete it. On the other hand, my stated strong preference for paper questionnaires is hardly borne out by the reality of their speedy disappearance into one of the piles of papers awaiting attention, usually forlornly, on the piano lid or study floor. Only two categories of survey seem to get further in my experience – on the one hand those that are so quick and obvious to respond to that it's as easy and efficient to complete and return them as to walk across to the waste paper basket or despatch them to the trash bin. The other category comprises those - only two in the last five years it has to be said - whose topic and focus is of such immediate and obvious appeal and relevance to myself that I find myself willing to put myself out and make time to address their questions within a reasonably short period of time.

But does this personal experience pertain to my being a priest or clergy person? If it does then it could well provide a useful insight into the experience of those I am intending to approach and help shape the style and content of the questionnaire. Or is it a matter more of temperament and personality? Less

useful then, immediately, but could quite possibly be a potent, if not vital, factor in matters of prayer, rather than a key factor in questionnaire design, that will need to be returned to once the information and data is received. I am resistant to putting too much weight on personality indicators and the neatness inherent in saying, for example, I am a Myers-Briggs 'ISFJ' or a 'Three' in the Enneagram (Chapter 3.3.1 below), as apparently I am. However they are a useful if limited way to explore certain preferences and styles of approach in life. Unless it could be clearly shown that a clear majority of clergy today tended in one direction, or one kind of typological manifestation as it were, rather than another then this approach would be less than helpful at this early research stage. Many have suggested clergy tend towards the introverted end of the psychological spectrum but the results of Oswald and Kroeger's survey (Oswald, 2010) proposed a majority of extroverts. In the responses attached to the survey one entrant reports that clergy in the US are more extrovert than introvert and that that situation is reversed in the UK, although further evidence is not cited (p1).

The notion of research as a fishing expedition tends to be disapproved of (Open University, 2007) and a tighter enquiry aimed at testing a specific hypothesis or theory usually is preferred. On the other hand others, Oliver (2004) for example, commend the process of collecting data, observing any emerging strands or themes, and allowing theory finally to evolve out of the perceived relationships between the emergent themes. The danger of this second approach is that without any guiding hypothesis the questions asked may tend to be unfocused and insufficient adequately to generate the data required for themes subsequently to emerge and a sufficiently valid hypothesis then to be identifiable. Creswell (2003, p6f) suggests that all researchers should start such a research project with properly articulated knowledge claims or paradigms, and he explores

Post-positivism, Constructivism, Advocacy/Participatory and Pragmatism as four possible schools. These effectively articulate the assumptions that may be around what will be learnt and how it will be learnt. If research is primarily about the testing of theory a clearly articulated paradigm would seem to be essential. If however the research is more about the generation of theory then the need for a paradigm would appear to be less vital. Additionally Robson (2002, p.43) speaks of historic 'paradigm wars' and argues that existing compatibility between the Pragmatic and Realist approaches reflect an underlying fundamental compatibility in the values of quantitative and qualitative research, a point also made by Barley (2010). Additionally, Gadamer (cited in Browning, 1996, p39) argues for the intimate relation of understanding, application and interpretation, so suggesting that theory could, if not should, arise from practice not the other way around. If an approach be needed here a Pragmatic/Realist attitude may be what initially has to be articulated as what is in operation regarding knowledge, assumptions and paradigms. Thus for me and for this research knowledge claims will generally arise from actions and practice rather than be antecedent to them. The Realist approach also can bring a useful critical element in the social practices it studies – external actions and patterns and habits of prayer will be linked to issues of understanding and meaning while at the same time perhaps revealing in what respects they themselves may be shaped or flawed. The Realist approach can also take into account the inevitable barriers that may well adversely affect fully authentic responses to any questionnaire, articulated as around issues of awareness, irrationality, inadmissibility and politeness by Oppenheim (1992, p211). Other paradigms may emerge as relevant and useful, indeed as wider patterns of meaning emerge a more Constructivist paradigm may even come to the theoretical fore. In summary I would like to assert my

methodology as a particularly Anglican one. Slocum points out that Anglican theology generally is pragmatic and responsive rather than systematic and that it is flexible, not rigorist, when it is practically applied (2013, p2). It is firmly in this spirit and within this tradition that my methodology is set.

Pushing deeper still there may however be a useful conversation to be had at this stage not about paradigms and theoretical perspectives but rather about what will constitute knowledge of this subject of the Office: the epistemological dimension if you like. Furthermore, with regard to ontological aspects, questions will need to be raised and discussed about the assumptions carried about being human and being a priest and being prayerfully reflective.

To bring into play a spatial analogy, it is therefore proposed, for the purposes of this research endeavour, to utilise the three, or possibly later the four, dimensions. Length, width, height or depth can all be manipulated and presented variously to produce a multiplicity of shapes and objects but the dimensions all follow the same rules and have comparable aspects however they are manifested. Thus here it is proposed that in the human experience of prayer there are dimensions that play out in as many different ways as there are people engaged with the practise of regular prayer, yet those dimensions all follow the same rules and have comparable aspects however they are manifested. One dimension being the relationship of the individual with their God and their experience of that relationship, a matter of height perhaps. Another dimension is all that preoccupies a priest or clergy person in their daily concerns, the multifarious aspects of ministry in the church today, all that they might be consciously juggling, a matter of length perhaps. This dimension needs also to include a wider perspective, issues of society and Gospel values, the bigger picture that can so often get squeezed out by more immediate concerns; a

matter of breadth over length then perhaps. A final dimension, for the time being at least, would then be that of personal engagement, issues of integrity, affectivity and personal story. This would comprise all that comprises the human person by way of environment, relationships, history, evolved habits, physical embodied experience, psychological aspects and matters of identity: a matter of depth perhaps, then.

Each of these dimensions can of course be developed by the individual in isolation. Prayer can on the one hand be overly focused on peak experiences of the divine and be ungrounded in messy reality. On the other hand it can be overly focused on the person themselves, their human development and sense of being and so ultimately be self-serving rather than Kingdom focused. Alternatively it can come to be primarily focused on the ministry at hand rather than on the person or God and so become little more than a work tool. That an overall balance in prayer here is required for health is one of the ontological assumptions that may need to be tested later – ontological because health here is not just a spiritual matter but a psychological one as well, affecting the praying individual as a human person as much as in their calling as a priest. Now, therefore, it would seem the time to explore more fully some of these underlying assumptions, and the Anglican ethos in which they are set, and suggest, at this point tentatively, the ontological underpinning of this enquiry.



## 2.2 Language and Theology

*As on this falcon quest I flew, To chase a quarry so divine, I had to soar so high and fine, That soon I lost myself from view. With loss of strength my plight was sorry, from straining on so steep a course. But love sustained me with such force, That in the end I seized my quarry. (St John of the Cross, 1951, p39)*

To question the theology and understanding of the daily Office raises the whole question of knowledge. In the West this has come largely to mean the intellectual knowing of material things. Knowledge here tends to be a form of possession, a means of circumscribing and describing that enables the thing known to be objectified and transmitted (Kenny, 1975, p156). The function of language then is to describe and contain by definitions either verbal or ostensive, by example. A corollary is that both knowledge and experience tend to be treated as private and personal and therefore 'pure' and separate and distinct from any expression or articulation. Knowing something is therefore a movement that may be summarised as that from pure experience through expression by a language of definition towards the knowledge of possession. Language with regard to matters spiritual has tended to rely on the same approach. Jantzen nicely summarises and challenges this when she writes that,

'while God could not be discovered in thought, it is possible to experience God in pure preconceptual consciousness. This intense, pre-linguistic experience is available only to those who will enter into themselves and recognise their innermost feelings. Any attempt to put into words inevitably detracts from it; furthermore, any such effort can necessarily be made only in terms of the words and concepts available in the subject's language and culture. It is in this way that various religions and creeds are born; but the basic, pre-linguistic experience is what really counts, and it is this which is shared across the divides of language, creed and culture' (1995, p344).

This approach though continues the separation of experience from articulation and works to keep mysticism detached from theology. It also disregards the fact that God by implication has become an object of encounter as well as of discourse, an element in the universe as possible potentially to encounter and

describe as a chair or a table, albeit with special and unique qualities. The consequent inability to experience and describe God, and the things of God, in these terms has lead inexorably to the statements of God's ineffability and the perception of the overriding apophysis of God in opposition to a more kataphatic way of knowing. Both the communal nature of experience and the necessarily public nature of language needs to be fully taken on board (Kenny, 1975, p180f). McIntosh discusses the relationship of experience and expression in terms of mysticism by commenting that, 'the move from mystical encounter to mystical text need not, therefore, be seen as a move from 'pure experience' to mere secondary interpretation' (1998, p114) rather 'whether mystical texts are abstract in tone or more experiential in imagery, their intentionality as mystical texts is towards the hidden reality of God's encounter with humanity. The movement of interpretation, therefore, is not backward towards a putative experience behind the text but forwards into reflection on the structure of the new world of divine-human encounter that is being opened up between the text and the reader' (1998, p142). In other words in matters spiritual there can rather be seen to be an unbroken line through encounter, experience, expression to fresh encounter; and so knowledge here must be more relational than merely explanatory. Rahner supports this when he re-states the Thomist three levels of knowing – the corporeal, the soul and the spiritual realities that lie beyond the soul - and reaffirms that intellectual knowing is only possible in an encounter with the material, not the spiritual, world (Rahner, 1968). So in knowing God, we cannot talk about God as an object of reality but as a principle of reality and indeed of knowledge itself. When therefore we seek to explore the daily Office knowledge, as in spirituality generally, will not be so much about possession but about making ourselves open or vulnerable, and any language used will necessarily be

less about description and aim more to provide a lens through which we may see. This is not to introduce a new approach but to reclaim an old one. It has been pointed out (Lash, 1996, p168) that Europe in the seventeenth century saw a massive shift in both language and imagination. By this shift the natural world became delineated as single, homogeneous and self-contained. Understanding this world became about the production of a body of knowledge that has, in Funkelstein's phrase, 'an unequivocal language with which it speaks and uniform objects of which it speaks' (1986, p41). The supernatural had previously only been used adjectively or adverbially to indicate the difference that is made when someone is enabled to behave in ways above their ordinary station or ability. Thereafter the supernatural began increasingly to denote a whole realm of being, a separate territory of existence, outside the known world and inhabited by anything such as demons, ghosts, angels and of course God. Knowledge of God shifted accordingly, from knowing oneself 'drawn by love outpoured in Christ' to 'a matter of supposing that there is, outside the world we know, a large and powerful entity called 'God'' (Lash, 1996, p169). However the two linguistic extremes of descriptive material language on the one hand and the language, when that proves insufficient, of ineffability on the other also permit though a more poetic use of language as a third possibility. McCabe (1982, p106f) restates Aquinas' distinction between metaphor and analogy and suggests that this use of language is a more creative way forward, a point underlined by Ricoeur (cited by Valdes, 1991, p55) who comments that metaphor is the place where apparently contradictory elements can combine to generate fresh insights and creative energy as well as permitting a new reality to emerge. In line with this, Walton argues that anyone who claims to think theologically must come to

the place of having 'lost the fear of unreason and learned to appreciate the art in our theological craft' (2008, p96).

### **2.3 Priesthood and humanity**

*You are a priest for ever, of the order of Melchizedek* (Hebrews 7.17)

In speaking of the theology of priesthood there is a danger of lapsing into speaking of the theory as against practice. Notions of the indelible nature of priesthood may not be borne out in the experience of, and for some indeed the denial of, those who, for whatever reason, have renounced their orders. But theologically it is clear (Barker, 2003, p112f) that the Christian understanding of priesthood was and is rooted in the idea that this was not about an appointment to an office but rather about the notion of being resurrected (Luke 20.36). The priest was made priest by the power of an indestructible life, transformed in the language of the Jewish Temple into an angel at their anointing (Barker, 2003, p129). This 'angelic' life implies a cleaving to God, both in the language of Genesis 2.24 where the cleaving of Adam and Eve mean they become one flesh and in the language of Deuteronomy 10.20 where cleaving is the term for absolute obedience to the commandments of the Lord. The priest and God become of one flesh and the priest can subsequently do no other than follow and live out the desires and wishes of God. Bishop Cosin writing in the seventeenth century could argue that,

'we which are Priests are called *angeli Domini*, and it is the Angel's office not only to descend to the people and teach them God's will, but to ascend also to the presence of God to make intercession for the people, and to carry up the daily prayers of the Church in their behalf, as here they are bounded to do' (1935, p629).

It is the anointing of the Holy Spirit that enables this new, distinct and permanent relationship with Christ, as well as with the Church and with society, and that

anointing is not just a one-off event but an on-going and necessary dependency.

Cosin's contemporary, Jeremy Taylor, could therefore write,

'ordination is a collation of holy graces of sanctification; of a more excellent faith, of fervent charity, of providence and paternal care: gifts which now descend not by way of miracle, as upon the apostles, are to be acquired by human industry, by study and good letters' (1990a, p230).

In more contemporary words therefore,

'the challenge of priestly spirituality is to develop rhythms of living in tune with the Spirit so that the Spirit can animate each aspect of priestly identity and transform the priest into a truly effective person-symbol of Christ' (Hauser, 1990, p1024).

The rhythm of the Daily Office, prayed in whatever way yet always requiring industry and commitment, is a vital ingredient in this on-going transformation and what might be called the 'cleaved' relationship between the priest and their God.

## **2.4 Experience and Scripture**

*A quarter of an hour of attention is better than a great many good works. Every time that we really concentrate our attention, we destroy the evil in ourselves*  
Simone Weil (Weil, 1951, p111)

In Montaigne's Essays we see a sustained attempt to integrate all the aspects of human experience in the service of a greater good: 'to compose our character is our duty, not to compose books, and to win, not battles and provinces, but order and tranquillity in our conduct. Our great and glorious masterpiece is to live appropriately' (Montaigne, 1958, 111:13 p851). A key ingredient here is the role of detachment, whereby all experience is judged and assimilated not by moral absolutes but by its own process of discernment,

'health, conscience, authority, knowledge, riches, beauty, and their opposites – all are stripped on entry and receive from the soul new clothing, and the colouring that she chooses – brown, green, bright, dark, bitter, sweet, deep, superficial – and which each soul chooses; for they have not agreed together on their styles, rules, and forms; each one is queen in her realm' (Montaigne, 1958, 1: 50 p220).

Similarly,

'I order my soul to look upon both pain and pleasure with a gaze equally self-controlled – *for it is as wrong for the soul to overflow from joy as to contract in sorrow* [Cicero] – and equally firm, but gaily at the one, at the other severely, and, according to its ability, as anxious to extinguish the one as to extend the other. Viewing good things sanely implies viewing bad things sanely. And pain has something not to be avoided in its mild beginning, and pleasure something to be avoided in its excessive ending' (Montaigne, 1958, 111: 13 p853).

There is much here mirrored in the writings of Ignatius Loyola, to a far more religiously articulated end. The main focus of this in the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius is the prayer of the Examen – both General and Particular (Loyola, 1951, p.23f) – but the principle of regular reflection on all of interior and embodied experience is part of a wider dynamic. Whether in apparent response to the Scripture passages being prayed through, whether prompted more directly by the Holy Spirit, or whether arising from points of personal resistance or areas of interior un-freedom Ignatius hopes to foster in the retreatant a constant process of awareness, reflection, and digestion so that the whole person can be the more conformed into the image and likeness of whoever God has created and continues to call them to be. This process happens within each hour and time of prayer, in the review of the time afterwards, in what is taken to the following prayer period, in the summation of the day in the final prayer period, in what forms the main topic of conversation with and reporting to the director in their daily meeting.

Scripture forms the staple diet of most manifestations of the Divine Office – in the psalmody and in passages of other biblical texts set forth – but the integration of all that Scripture can enable and inspire with the human realities of each individual is also a vital part of the meaning and purpose of the Office, in its role in integrative reflection. Thus resistances and negative patterns should be expected to emerge in the prayer which on the one hand could frustrate the

effectiveness of it or be a factor, if not indeed a cause, in its cessation. Or, on the other hand, their negotiation could be a cause of growth in Christian maturity and freedom before God. Montaigne comments,

‘There is no one who, if he listens to himself, does not discover in himself a pattern all his own, a ruling pattern, which struggles against education and against the tempest of the passions that oppose it’. (Montaigne, 1958, 111: 2 p615)

And he notes also,

‘vicious souls’ are often incited to do good by ‘extraneous impulse’ so those who seek sanctity may well have a tendency to ‘corruption’ – supercelestial thoughts going hand in hand with subterranean conduct (Montaigne, 1958, p.xiv).

This may well point to the notion of patterns or tendencies that clergy in particular may be susceptible to, the aspects of a group shadow shared by those in public ordained ministry.

## **2.5 Reading and friendship**

*‘Tomorrow shall be my dancing day, I would my true love did so chance, to see the legend of my play, to call my true love to the dance... Then up to heaven I did ascend, where now I dwell in sure substance, on the right hand of God that man, may come into the general dance.’* (traditional Cornish song quoted in Williams, 1995, p61)

The prayer of the Office is a form of prayer rooted in reading and recitation. Times of silence, thoughts prompted, feelings evoked, contrition and thanksgiving offered, petitions made, intercessions arising all are in response to this primary endeavour. Proust describes reading ‘as the fruitful miracle of communication in the bosom of solitude’, and while he questions Ruskin’s averment that reading can supply the preponderance of a spiritual life he acknowledges that standing as it does ‘at the threshold of our inner life; it can lead us into that life but cannot constitute it’ (1971, p21f). The material selected will distinguish of course whether reading is to be merely the ‘noblest of distractions’ (ibid, p36) or the ‘magic key’ opening ‘the door deep inside us to the dwelling places we would not

otherwise have known how to reach' (ibid, p27). Proust's understanding of reading is that our minds are fashioned ultimately by contact with other minds - in Scripture of course it is the mind of God mediated through the various scriptural authors that is the dominant influence. But Proust goes further (ibid, p41) to speak of the importance of the spaces between the words and phrases read, for 'in the intervals which separate them, there remains, even now, ...filling up the interstices, a silence many centuries old.' Thus through these interstices past and present can mix and in silence, during the Office at least, the eternity of God can be experienced in the present, and the relationship with God deepened and made the more intimate.

Hadot (1995, p109) speaks of reading as a spiritual exercise and comments that,

'we have forgotten how to read: how to pause, liberate ourselves from our worries, return into ourselves, and leave aside our search for subtlety and originality, in order to meditate calmly, ruminate, and let the texts speak to us...As Goethe said: "Ordinary people don't know how much time and effort it takes to learn how to read. I've spent eighty years at it, and I still can't say that I've reached my goal."

Ruskin speaks of reading as an art (2011, p56) and Proust of it as friendship (1971, p33). Friendship, like reading, can have the aspect and character of a purely human experience or, on the other hand, it can be one of the key Christian virtues. Friendship and its resulting intimacy have been spoken of as one of the hall-marks of any proper Christian maturity (Collins, 2002, p19f) and the word itself shares the same root as the word freedom (Carmichael, 2004, p180), another central Gospel value. The Christian writers most associated with the notion of friendship include Benedict and Anselm, but above all Aelred of Rievaulx. They drew on the Aristotelian distinction between the useful, as in utilitarian, and the useless, as in being an end in itself rather than merely a means to some other end. Utilitarian motives for reading might be the avoidance of boredom and the purposes of distraction or for improvement and to facilitate



some task. Useless reading, as with useless friendships, will be something rather different – as Aristotle could be paraphrased as having said in Book VIII of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, ‘the most important friendships are the least useful’ (1951, p246f). Cardinal Newman reflected the same point in his discussion of the *Rise and Progress of Universities*, where knowledge could be a means to an end or an end in itself, a means say of ambition or simply a part of human flourishing (1875, p195-199). The reasons many clergy abandon the saying (reading) of the Office may well be that it seems to have no point – its purpose so theoretical as to be meaningless. The following research will need to question these points but what if the very meaningless and lack of use is at the heart of the value of the Office? Those who turn from it in despair or distaste - or simply disheartened - may run the risk of preferring more useful forms of prayer or more productive uses of time. Milton’s ‘Blind mouths’ may well be the outcome, that phrase picked up by Ruskin (2011, p70f) and applied to the pastor, the pastor who has lost his (or now her) way. The daily recitation of the Office may well then be best cast as an integral part of a process of befriending, though both the task and the outflowing friendship hallmarked by being useless rather than useful. The Office enables thus the further and on-going befriending of Scripture, of oneself, of one’s vocation and of God - as well as the means of the further and on-going befriending by God himself. For God’s friendship and his desire for friendship must also be useless – it does not arise from need but from a superabundance of ‘divine relational life’ (Barry, 2008, p.xiv). The perichoretic dance of the Trinity, because of the Incarnation, reaches out to include and embrace all, and, above all perhaps, the priest, the mediator and lightning rod of the encounter.

## 2.6 The ethos of Anglicanism

*'Though she had a thousand good qualities; she was not without her faults, amongst which one might perhaps reckon too great lenity to her servants, to whom she always gave good counsel, but often too gentle correction.'* (Arbuthnot, 1987, p126)

A journalistic description of Anglicanism proposed it to be

*'a God-fearing receptacle for intelligent doubt; the marrying of a quietist belief in order, duty, decency and the evident difference between right and wrong with a shrewd suspicion that anyone who thinks he can be sure of more than that is probably dangerous.'* (Parris, 2005).

Fortunately perhaps the very breadth and comprehensive nature of Anglicanism ensures many more than a single reading or definition of its ethos. At best some of the key ingredients in this Anglican experience can be suggested, all of which may have some impact on the daily prayer of the Anglican clergy.

**2.6.1** The 'Common' in the title of Cranmer's great work, *The Book of Common Prayer*, remains true. What Robert Hannaford has called 'a persistent sense of the sacred' (1998, p125) seems part of the English experience and as true for the non-church going as for the church going public. With the former this is reflected in the popular usage of religious rites of passage, the turning to prayer at national moments of grief or concern and the continued findings of current research. With regard to the latter, myriad forms of daily prayer continue to be provided for the laity as well as for the clergy: bible notes, prayer books, websites, phone apps and so on. Nineteenth century fiction reveals the historic continuity of this phenomena, be it Elizabeth Gaskell's (1895, p334) daily evening recitation of a psalm by labourers in the field or Mrs Henry Wood's (1888, p263) morning reading of verses from Scripture by the more leisured classes. This regular exposure to core scriptural passages and key liturgical texts enabling by repetition material to 'enter the memory and feed the soul' (Earey, 2013, p.81).

**2.6.2** Though common, another characteristic would seem to be that Anglican prayer avoids on the whole too many extremes. At the Reformation Davies suggests (1988, p189) that the rich inheritance of English medieval mysticism largely moved abroad and never really became the possession of Anglicanism. On the other hand evangelical 'enthusiasm' and Tractarian ritualism all made their mark but neither did they fully colonize and come to dominate the mainstream Anglican spirit. As Avis proposes (2002, p310) the Platonic philosophy which Anglicanism can be said to be rooted in has been and remains moderated by Kantian moralism, Darwinian empiricism and a relational or social metaphysic.

**2.6.3** This social metaphysic bears fruit in a stress on engagement with society and social issues both by the institution and the individual, with voluntary work and pastoral responsibility a priority. Linked with the aforementioned moderation it is reform rather than revolution (Avis, 2002, p313) that tends to be the preferred means of building the Kingdom of God in this world. For this goes hand in hand with a strong emphasis on the doctrine of the Incarnation, and matter in Anglicanism tends to be seen as neither evil nor inferior (ibid p311). The presence and purposes of God are therefore the more likely to be perceived in the natural order of things rather than in a direct or supernatural way (Wolf, 1982, p186).

**2.6.4** The integration of doctrine and praxis also speaks of the wider Anglican insight into the desirability of a fuller integration of theology and devotion and the attempt to synthesize head and heart, reason and emotion, the corporate and personal (Thornton, 1984, p71f). Saint Anselm is a key figure here as is more generally Saints Augustine and Benedict, for Anglicanism has also always stressed its continuity with the past, and indeed its ancient roots in the New

Testament. That which is historical tends therefore (Wolf, 1982, p186) to take precedence over the theoretical just as the moral and ethical is preferred to the speculative. Ultimately though, it is the integration of the biblical, liturgical and pastoral that here stands out.

**2.6.5** This stress on synthesis can lead the Anglican Church to attempt to hold together not only the apparently contradictory but also the irreconcilable, as recent tensions within the national church and the wider international Anglican communion have tended to show up. The strands of diversity within the church speak of the rich, though at times conflicting, inheritance that Anglicanism incorporates (Nicholls, 1993, p170): The evangelical or 'low' Church wing arising from Lollard, Lutheran and Calvinist influences; the Anglo-catholic or 'high' Church wing arising within Tudor conservatism and the Caroline Divines; the Liberal or 'broad' Church wing arising from Hooker's settlement, the Cambridge Platonists and Latitudinarianism. This leads some to condemn Anglicanism for its variety and consequent lack of clarity but the spirit of generosity and tolerance that undergirds this very confusion and contradiction remains the deeper and more profound truth. In Stancliffe's words the aim is for 'a sense of unity by inclusion, rather than of uniformity by exclusion.' (quoted in Earey, 2013, p.86). As will be seen there can be very different understandings of and engagements with the daily prayer of the Office resulting from this diversity.

**2.6.6** Finally *The Book of Common Prayer*. As a book it may not hold the sway it once did but imaginatively it is still a crucial part of Anglican self perception:

'A beloved and battered possession, a lifelong companion and guide, to be carried from Church to kitchen, to parlour, to bedside table, equally adaptable to liturgy, personal devotion and family prayer.' (Thornton, 1984, p74).

Whatever book or medium is now used Anglican prayer remains generally deeply domestic, bridging Church and daily living, arising from the moral maturity and

personal responsibility of the individual as they seek to deepen the experience and expression of their faith in their life and in society.

## **2.7 Summary**

Archbishop Michael Ramsey criticised the Anglicanism's Prayer Book tradition as suffering 'from being too verbose, too preachy and too cerebral' (quoted in Stevenson, 1982, p36). These are points which the clerical respondents of the research questionnaire here may have some further comment on. But, as Williams points out, Anglican spirituality and liturgy at its best comprises a deep connection between 'the catholic pattern of life in the Body of Christ with the patterns of community that prevail in *this* place and time;' a connection that enables the concrete and the local but 'in such a way which does not become human-centred but continues to evoke the primacy of God's holiness and generosity' (1991, p6f). However this may or may not play out in the experience of the clergy today in their daily prayer is the matter of this research project.

Much has been written of the theory and theology of the daily Office but there is little enough evidence of what actually happens nor of what is understood about it. While the questionnaire at the heart of this research will inevitably have its limitations and while the range of respondents will mean they are not likely to be fully representative of the whole, even so such a research project as this will have practical insights to offer and be of interest and use to the clergy themselves, their diocese and additionally all involved in the training of clergy today.

The research field was limited to the Anglican experience, and that within the Church of England, for the sake of consistency and conciseness as well as enabling me to draw on my own experience and my own contacts for accessing those to approach. It was also limited to those in ministry for similar reasons,

though the story of the laity and daily prayer is deeply intertwined with that of the clergy, and light was shed upon both as the research unfolded. Bishops and deacons were not the primary focus of the clergy approached and so the main focus has always been the clergy who are ordained as priest but a lack of initial clarity on my part meant that at times the distinctions were blurred, though not thereby detrimental to the aims of the research itself.

Much of the literature is focused theologically and historically and while most authors elegantly steer their way through the intricacies of the story of the daily Office, so far the actual realities of the present situation remain out of focus and largely unaddressed. It is hoped this research project will provide a base for information as well as action, enabling further research as necessary and empowering the clergy with a clearer grasp of the present situation.

## Chapter 3 Contexts and Contents

*As well as examining the varied contents of the daily Office a variety of different contexts are explored in this chapter: firstly the history of the Office as it has evolved over the Christian centuries and later the psychological, liturgical and professional aspects which impinge, or may well impinge, on the experience of the Office today.*

### **3.1 Context: The story of the Office so far**

While the practice of the early Church seems undoubtedly to have been influenced by the Jewish culture within which it arose, the precise nature of that influence remains disputed, particularly with regard to the prayer of the Christian community. Daniel's practice of praying three times a day (Daniel 6.10) is often quoted but there seems little evidence (Dugmore, 1964, p65) that there was anything communal or regular in his day so this may well more likely have been a matter of private devotion and personal custom. But while daily prayers by the Jewish faithful in their homes may be generally unlikely, in urban areas, where Christianity first flourished, daily prayers did evolve in the Synagogues to correspond with the offerings taking place in the Temple, and some have linked the Christian practice of twice daily prayer back to the twice daily sacrifice of a lamb in the Temple and the daily twofold offering of incense (Mateos, 1968, p32). And though the twice daily prayer of the Church is now generally thought not to have direct Jewish roots, the Canons of Hippolytus, supported by Tertullian's evidence, suggest that some form of morning and evening prayer was in place for the Christian community by the year 200 AD (Woolfenden, 2004, p4). This may well have been part of a threefold pattern of prayer; possibly at morning, noon and evening or at the third (9am), sixth (noon) and ninth hours(3pm) (Bradshaw,

2002, p175) with the former perhaps being the case in more rural areas and the latter in urban ones (ibid, p102). The Didache, dated approximately as early second century, commends the thrice daily saying of the Lord's prayer as it is 'to supply the want of the daily reunions in the morning and the evening, which could not take place without great danger' (Baudot, 1909, p7). Clement of Rome refers to acts of worship outside the mass whilst Clement of Alexandria indicates that the daily prayer of his day was only private (White, 1992). Given the geographic spread of the various Christian communities and their necessarily intermittent development any inconsistency is not to be remarked at, especially when combined with a considerable lack of factual evidence. Although the different prayers of the day may have had a different emphasis, the morning being associated with the rising sun and the evening with Christ as light of the world (Palazzo, 1998, p115) there is no evidence that the prayer of morning and evening at this point were regarded as of particular importance over against the other prayers of the day. Indeed Oury (1982, p689) suggests that the most ancient of the day's prayers would have been that of the afternoon, at 3pm (the ninth hour) as this would have been the time of sacrifice in the Temple, a time also of significance for Ezra (9.5), Judith (9.1) and Daniel (9.21) and for the Church too it was the time of Jesus' death upon the Cross. Following this would have come next the prayer at or before the rising of the sun and then at the time of evening. Anyway Bradshaw suggests (2006b, p1) that the various times and practises of prayer combined over time to produce a composite of five or even six times of prayer a day with one in the night. However Proctor's comment should still also be noted (1919, p349): that 'the whole of this history is very obscure, and most of these questions .....afford plenty of scope for conjectures, but very little for statements of fact.'



Additionally the possible additional influence of the classical world on the prayer of the early church should not be ignored. Lonsdale (1998) speaks of the dual and equal influence of Greek as well as Hebrew culture and thought on the formation of Christian spirituality. The former contributing an entitative, psychological understanding of spirituality as being with regard to that which is non-material; the latter an understanding of spirituality that is more moral, defined by that in life which is lived with regard to the Spirit of God. Both definitions weave in and out of the Christian story from the start to the present, and each possesses its own set of strengths and weaknesses. If such be the case, and however little attention has been paid to this possibility so far, why should the Greek world not influence the pattern of Christian prayer as strongly as the Hebraic?

According to Hadot (1995, pp82-103) regular spiritual exercises were an important part of both Hellenistic and Roman schools of philosophy. In Stoicism the method of such exercises was the replacement of a 'human' vision of reality, where values depend on our passions, by a 'natural' vision of things, in which each event is set within the perspective of universal nature. By this transformation of vision, over time, a metamorphosis of the inner self was achieved. In both Epicureanism and Stoicism attention to the present moment is key to these exercises because it frees the individual from the passions which are caused by the two areas which do not depend on them, the past and the future. Reading provides food for such meditation, and the regular practical exercise of meditation and its fruits were intended to inculcate habit and contribute to the healing of the soul. The spiritual exercises more associated with Plato were marked by a dualism of body and spirit which certainly entered the Christian tradition. These can be seen as an attempt to liberate the individual from a

partial and passionate viewpoint for one that is universal and normative. The freedom won here is that which equates with a return to one's true self.

What is suggested is that the forms and times of daily prayer can be largely attributed to the Jewish inheritance of the Church, and as well some of the contents of those times of prayer, but that the attitude towards and understanding of the purpose of daily prayer can in part be traced to the Church's Hellenistic inheritance. This will become the more obvious with some spiritual practices such as the Examen and the much later Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola. But Hadot points out (1995, p107, 127) that much of Hellenistic philosophy was absorbed by Christianity which was keen to present itself as another school of philosophy, at the same time assimilating into itself the traditional practices of those earlier spiritual exercises. Thus the spiritual exercises of Greek philosophy emerge in the thought of Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Augustine and in the practices of monasticism.

For the purposes of this research project complete clarity about the origin and the development of the Office is not essential however many strands that are present in the Anglican experience today can be seen to be already emerging here – the public versus the private, the individual versus the communal, self-actualisation versus the offering of the church, the consecration of time and the day versus the commemoration or remembering of the events of salvation history. Moreover the confusion and apparent contradictions of some of the early evidence itself would seem to be repeated in the confusion and apparent contradictions of today's understanding and experience of the Office.

After the year 300AD the picture becomes clearer and increasingly consistent, though the contradictory and contributory influences upon the Office continue within varying and very different circumstances. The urban centres of the first

flourishing churches were the forum for what is sometimes called 'the people's Office' (Guiver, 1988, p94); the emerging monastic houses and their own Office had their own distinctive pattern and form, as did those of the committed laity whose private prayer was often nurtured by their local churches, in the east called 'devoti', as well as that of the ascetic solitaries, dwelling in the desert or isolated areas of the countryside. A summary will be given of these and the other main movements, using the terms for the different Offices suggested by the main authors discussed above in Chapter 1. While the different authors suggested different terms they will all be used here both with regard to their historical moment and as labels that continue to reflect various aspects of the Office still of relevance and importance today.

### **3.1.1 The People's Office**

Of the four main movements this is the most ancient and the least visible today, at least in the West. By people here is meant all people, clergy and laity, for while the word *laos* is used in the New Testament it means there all people, including the clergy (Peel, 1991, p19). The laity as a distinct category of person emerged later in the early Church in the first part of the third century (Faivre, 1984, p69). When the separate category of laity did emerge they were effectively an elite: the term initially referring to those men, married and monogamous, who were baptised believers and to whom the task fell of releasing the clergy from material concerns. By the fourth century the term was extended to women as well and then came to refer to all Christians who were not clergy. What remained bridging the divide – between laity and clergy as well as between the later and earlier understanding of the term *laos* – was the charism of bearing witness in through the liturgy of the Church and in daily life (Faivre, 1984, p213). The

essential contents of the Office these two groups joined together in were a partial and occasional use of psalmody with central intercessions combined with liturgical actions and connections re-presenting salvation history as understood through the person of Jesus Christ. This prayer was not offered in formal liturgical and public assemblies but is more likely to have been offered by individuals or small groups of family or friends, though each person's prayer was clearly seen as participation in the prayer of the whole Church (Bradshaw, 2009, p105). In the Apostolic tradition (Woolfenden, 2004, p32f) Morning Prayer may well have had a particular link with baptism and the life of the baptised and be a time of instruction, prayer at the Third and Ninth hour had the theme of thanksgiving while that of the Sixth hour had a penitential emphasis. The Ninth hour had strong associations as well with light and the beginning of a new day leading to resurrection (the early Church following the Jewish custom of the day beginning at nightfall). Regional variation meant that different versions of this flourished throughout the West, though Woolfenden suggests (2004, p47) that there may have been strong similarities between Milanese, Gallican, Celtic and Iberian observances but that each anyway was progressively replaced by Roman practice as time went by. The Roman emphasis was more straightforward: Prayer of the Evening was for sustenance after the trials of the day, protection through the coming night and to contrast earthly changeability with the unchanging God; Prayer of the Morning focussed on the parallel between the new day and the eternal day to come (Woolfenden, 2004, p203). Over time this prayer evolved toward a more liturgical celebration (Mateos, 1967, p480) and the formal acts of lamp lighting and incense offering that became variously parts of the ritual had the effect of reinforcing the different flavour of the different hours of prayer, the evening coming to be associated with the daily commemoration of

Christ's burial and descent among the dead whilst the morning was associated with the Lord's resurrection (Storey, 1976, p56).

The popular observance in the West of the Office came largely to be lost, mainly through the increasing clericalisation of the Office that began with monasticism, though this may not entirely have been the case in the East, where for example Jungman cites the Christian laity in 1950s Iraq regularly joining their clergy for daily matins and vespers. (1965, p75). Ultimately though, as Bradshaw comments,

‘the vision of ‘church’ reflected in the practice of the third century was one in which each individual was equally responsible for playing his or her part in maintaining the priestly activity of the body. This was replaced in the fourth century by a more centralised, hierarchically ordered, institutional model of the Church, still involving the whole body in prayer but with much more stress on the community than on the individual’ (Bradshaw, 2009, p107).

Inevitably perhaps this new model of the Church focused more on the prayer of the specialist rather than that of the lay person. While Storey has commented that few of the laity would even know what a breviary looks like (1975, p3) the popularity of Books of Hours that proliferated from the fourteenth to the mid-twentieth century ensured the laity participated ‘in spirit and, to some degree, in form in the Liturgy of the Hours’ (Storey, 1975, p5).

### **3.1.2 The Prayer of Monasticism**

From the earliest time there seems to have been people who not only wanted to mark particular hours of the day by prayer but to fulfil the scriptural injunction to ‘pray constantly’ (1Thessalonians 5.17). For some this prayer was to accompany daily tasks but gradually and increasingly it became the hall-mark of a particular movement, originally a lay one. These could be hermits or communities of monks but what they shared, and which was distinctly different from the prayer of their contemporaries in the urban centres, was a greater focus on scripture and

meditation. The ethos here has been described as primarily 'inward looking' (Bradshaw, 2006b, p3) and it was to have a massive impact on nearly every aspect of Christian spirituality. Under the influence of monasticism the fundamental understanding of prayer itself came to shift from one end of the spectrum, whereby 'every undertaking could become a prayer', to the other, whereby 'prayer itself now became the sole undertaking, replacing all other tasks' (Schmemmann quoted in Wainwright, 1984, p470). Psalms and hymns assume a central place in the daily offices and now are 'no longer freely chosen and sung by individual members of the community, but are now fixed and performed by an officially appointed cantor' (Bradshaw, 2009, p107). Additionally the monastic traditions of the West remained influenced by the ideals and practise of the hermits and solitaries of the desert in the East as can be seen in such changes in usage, later enshrined in the Rule of St Benedict, as the recitation of the whole psalter in course, the general disappearance of intercessory prayer, the introduction of regular biblical readings and the elimination of silent meditation at certain key points in the Office. The ecclesial dimension which had undergirded the prayer of the early Christian communities here begins to give way to a primary focus on individual formation and personal holiness. There was a consequent weakening of the earlier sense of mission to the whole world and of the need to pray for all God's creation. Both had a major influence not only on ecclesiology but also spirituality for this was a development that 'seriously distorted the nature of the activity and led to an impoverishment and narrowing of its focus' (Bradshaw, 2009, p110f).

### **3.1.3 The Cathedral Office**

The monastic movement had begun as a retreat from the city (Davies, 1988, p125) which had come to be seen as being the place of much early persecution of the faith and later the place that had confronted Christianity with questions of assimilation and distortion after her establishment as the religion of the Roman Empire under Constantine. This retreat to the desert or the wilderness aimed to recapture the original lost holiness of Christianity's pre-establishment days. Later however, with the success of the various monastic movements, there was effectively a return to the cities. Bishops of the new urban dioceses were often drawn from monastic communities and, with the founding of the cathedrals for those dioceses, religious houses were often invited to take responsibility for their liturgy and administration. This gave rise to an urban variant of the monastic Office which has been called 'Cathedral'. This term has been used elsewhere at times to refer to what I have above called the People's Office but here I use the term to describe not a return to the more urban earlier Office of the people but to that which originated in the non-Eucharistic public devotion of the Church evolving out of monastic custom and practice. There had also been an increasing blurring between monastic and clerical vocations (Bradshaw, 2006b, p5) and so monastic life was decreasingly a lay movement. The Office as performed in the cathedrals and great churches of the cities, though public, was thus largely now a clerical matter, sung with increasingly elaborate chant, in Latin. The laity continued to attend often at morning and evening but now as observers only, and in due course attendance even at these two times of the day diminished and came to be restricted to Sundays and major feast days.

### 3.1.4 The Clerical Office

The singing of the monastic and cathedral Office came to be an increasing burden, so much so as to become understood as an obstacle for friars and for ordinary clergy engaged in parish work or attending the universities. As a result an abbreviated one volume version of the Office was produced, thereafter known as the Breviary. Though practical for the needs of the individuals and small groups for whom it was produced, it helped shift the emphasis of the Office from communal celebration to individual recitation, and was a step further from the notion of Office as public praise to that of the Office as private offering. The now customary eight times of prayer began here to be grouped into two blocks and when Archbishop Cranmer produced a daily Office for the new *Book of Common Prayer* for the Church of England in the mid sixteenth century he was substantially influenced by this trend as well as the reformed Breviary that had recently been produced for the Roman Catholic Church by Cardinal Quinones (Ratcliff, 1932, p266). While the reformed protestant movement resisted the notion of the Office as 'work' to satisfy God (Bradshaw, 2006b, p7) as in opposition to the tenet of justification by faith alone, Cranmer affirmed the purpose of the Office as the advancement of godliness. Thus the clerical Office followed the monastic understanding of the centrality of psalmody and Scripture and that the main focus of the Office was the on-going discipline and formation in sanctity of the individual priest. Indeed, the Office by this time was not regarded as liturgy in any normal sense of the word (Storey, 1975, p3). So although Cranmer had a vision of providing for the prayer of the whole 'common' people, the daily Office in England continued largely a matter for the clergy, the prayer of the people running in a different, though perhaps parallel, groove.



### **3.1.5 The Prayer of the People**

In the thirteenth century primers in English had emerged for the laity with an Office of simple shape, thematic structure and fixed content, Books of Hours, which proliferated after the arrival of printing. Guiver calls these 'one of the most outstanding success-stories in the history of liturgy and popular devotion' (1988, p110), representing a fascinating return to some of the principles of the old People's Office after all the elaboration of the monastic and clerical Office. After the Reformation provision continued to be made for the daily prayer of the people, in a wide range of popular books of devotion. These ranged in formality from those which provided a pattern of prayer aimed to be a disciplined rule of life to those which sought to support the study of scripture or to foster a rhythm of intercessory prayer or both. Alongside this ran the use of memorised psalms, and prayer here equally had an individual and communal aspect, be it the psalm recited in the field or the daily reading of scripture and a collect within a household community. The story of the former river Fleet in London has been described as 'a decline from a river to a brook, from a brook to a ditch, and from a ditch to a drain' (Barton, 1962, p29). The same in a sense could be said of the early People's Office where its original form and strength were diminished and many of distinctive characteristics appeared to disappear completely over time. However whilst this may be true with regard to the formal Office of the Church it can be seen that within the realm of the popular prayer of the laity many of its key elements were kept alive. And whilst over the centuries the urban monastic Office came to dominate how the Office was perceived and experienced it did not do so without assimilating aspects of the other ecclesiastical Offices and of the prayers of private devotion (Mateos, 1967, p485).

### 3.1.6 Recent Developments

As with Cranmer in the sixteenth century many if not most of the twentieth century revisions of the daily Office within Anglicanism remained in some kind of parallel step with the alterations and reforms regarding the provisions made by the Roman Catholic church. The nineteenth century had seen a revival of Anglican worship around the restoration of the place of the Eucharist and a re-discovery of the reality and value of the interior life. The latter meant a 'fresh emphasis placed upon personal training in self-discipline and prayer' (Underhill, 1984, p338). In the twentieth century the belief remained that the daily Office should be centred on the reading of substantial portions of Scripture and the recitation of the psalms, although there were various attempts to reduce the quantity needed to be read. In 1872 an attempt was made in the Shortened Services Act (Earey, 2013, p36) while the 1980 *Alternative Services Book* offered shorter forms of both Morning and Evening Prayer, neither proving of popular interest. Significant change did not really come about until the Franciscan based *Celebrating Common Prayer* of 1992 and then with *Common Worship* in 2000. Increasing choice was suggested, richer and more varied forms were offered that made more of the difference between Morning and Evening Prayer, including liturgical actions, while notions of meditation and the ongoing formation of the individual were balanced with a greater stress on the praise of God and intercessory prayer. For some the choices offered unnecessarily increased complexity and choice, so much so that in commenting on *Celebrating Common Prayer* Bradshaw suggests that it was 'culpable of Thomas Cranmer's criticism that it could sometimes take longer to find out what to pray than to pray it' (2006b, p11). Both volumes were part of a wider liturgical move to provide resources for selection by individuals and communities rather than supply texts to be followed

by all. Partly perhaps the conservatism of the clergy has mitigated against this always happening successfully and partly the principles upon which a selection might be made were not always usefully spelt out. Although the latter volume highlighted mandatory material which sought to maintain a balance of praise, Scripture and intercession the reasons lying behind the selection were not made particularly explicit. What has been claimed (Bradshaw, 2006b, p12) as *Common Worship's* most innovative element with regard to the provision for daily Prayer is the provision for a flexible Service of the Word, presented as an alternative, or possibly as an addition (Fletcher, 2002, p21), to Morning and Evening Prayer, and yet it remains an element that is apparently largely undiscovered or unappreciated and under-used. The provisions have also been criticised subsequently for being overly traditional: still based on assumptions about parish frameworks, and more about maintenance than mission in terms of the development of faith (Earey, 2013, p25). Developments permitted by the rise of the Internet have also to be recognised, which may in part be about accessing a wider range of material and increased flexibility or in part about the Office itself being accessed as a phone app each day. Research into this aspect suggests the Internet, properly exploited by the Church, could positively be a dynamic resource for spiritual formation (Mason, 2005).

## **3.2 Contents**

*While not all of the different ingredients of the Office will be always and everywhere present they do together form the substance of the prayer and comprise its key ingredients of the praise of God, the recitation of and reflection upon Scripture and the prayer for the needs of the Church and the world. A brief introduction to each ingredient aims to give the background and history of each element and so prompt afresh a consideration of their role and value.*

### **3.2.1 Hymnody**

The use of hymns in the Western Church (Britt, 1922, p22f) arises first in the fourth century, perhaps associated with Hilary of Poitiers who during a time of exile in Phrygia came into contact with the Greek metrical hymns coming into use by the church of the East at that time. The hymns of his contemporary Ambrose of Milan were then largely written to combat heresy and convey correct Christian doctrine in a form that was easily memorised and most suitable for congregational singing. Hymnody enters the Monastic Office formally in the 6<sup>th</sup> century through the Rule of St Benedict and while they are likely to have been in use by the secular clergy since the time of Ambrose the Church of Gaul and Spain formally acknowledged their place in the Office by the 9<sup>th</sup> century and for the more conservative Rome they are not admitted until the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

In Rome there was a re-writing of the hymns in the seventeenth century under the influence of humanism and under the aegis of Pope Urban VIII to make them more classical in expression and metre, an aesthetically and theologically disastrous move in the eyes of many (Connelly, 1957, pxviif). In English there are still varieties of translations available, to one of which one may become accustomed and attached over time: witness how hymn translations differ in *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, *The English Hymnal* and more modern renderings

available on the Internet. Hymns can be placed at the intersection of poetry and prayer, in St Augustine's words 'the praise of God in song' (1996, p677), and as such they should, in many people's opinion, be recited or sung rather than read: 'to read a hymn is like reading a libretto; the composer is not justified and the reader is not satisfied' (Connelly pxv).

### **3.2.2 Psalmody and antiphons**

Though psalms were regarded as lyrical poetry in the original Hebrew (Little, 1957, p37) during the early Christian centuries the psalms were first seen as comprising more prophetic texts and so were read more as one of the books of Scripture for edification rather than inspiration (Miller, 1959, p168). It was only later, under the same pressures of rising heresy that drove Ambrose's hymnody, that the Church came to see the Psalter more as a song book. By the time of Egeria's account of her travels to Jerusalem at the end of the fourth century psalms were an essential ingredient in all aspects of the Church's liturgy (Senn, 1997, p114). The earliest communal custom seems to have been that the psalm be sung by a cantor with a congregational response, such as an alleluia or a refrain or perhaps an excerpt from the psalm itself (Wakefield, 1998, p207). Later custom suggests the whole congregation may have sung the psalm together in unison, although, as has been seen, liturgical practice came to be increasingly dominated by the usage of the monasteries. Augustine could write that the singing of psalms meant that one was more moved by the melody adopted or the quality of the voice of the cantor than the actual words but accepted that it had the ability to 'elevate weaker souls to devotion' (quoted in Flynn, 2006, p775). The ability of the psalm to be both a reading from Scripture and a song or hymn had its own tensions, which were resolved one way in the Eucharist, with the

emergence of a 'gradual' psalm that connects and supports the readings, and another way in the Office, whether during the latter they are sung or, as is more usual now, said.

The learning of the Psalter was for the second Council of Nicea the indispensable condition for the Office of Bishop and many were the monastic rules that bound each member of the community to know the Psalms by heart (Little, 1957, p41f). Cranmer in compiling the Prayer Book directed the recitation of the whole psalter each month while the 1662 revision of the Prayer Book, following St Benedict's Rule, restored psalm 95 as an opening or Invitatory psalm (Lamb, 1962, p118) whilst adding the direction that the Glory be should be sung or said after each psalm and each portion of psalm 119 (ibid, p146). At the time of the Savoy Conferences the reformers proposed leaving much of the contents of the Office to the discretion of the minister though they did recommend the reduction of the saying of the Glory be to once only, in part replacing it with an Amen to help with

'quicken, continuing, and uniting our devotion, which is apt to freeze or sleep, or flat in a long continued prayer or form: it is necessary therefore for the edifying of us therein to be often called upon and awakened by frequent Amens' (Cardwell, 1849, p339).

The antiphons, when they appear, are closely associated with the Psalms, often suggesting the particular theme of the psalm or of the feast day being celebrated (Clynes, 1960, p176) and at the same time setting the tone for the singing to come. Originally the antiphon was intoned by a cantor and then sung by the faithful after each verse of the psalm until eventually it was largely restricted to the beginning and end – one of the remaining examples of the former method being the provision for the Venite or Invitatory in the Roman Office. It has been suggested that the existing custom of reciting the verses from the psalms alternately is a remnant of the ancient use of an antiphon (Blakeney, 1866, p338). During the process of revising the Roman Office after the Second Vatican

Council the issue of antiphons and whether or not they should be retained in a Breviary primarily designed for use by the clergy in private was discussed, and it was agreed that their musical function was secondary to their primary aim, which was

‘to foster prayer and contemplation, to give a typological sense to a psalm, to illuminate a certain idea contained in a psalm, to interpret a psalm, or to apply a psalm to the theme of a feast’ (Campbell, 1995, p117).

Athanasius, writing in the fourth century, could reflect on the fact that the psalms embrace the whole of life, portraying every aspect of the human heart and condition (Little, 1957, p39) but their centrality for Christian worship is only in part explained by their apparently universal appeal. For the Church has also come to understand the psalms to have been so molded by the Holy Spirit as to carry a meaning far surpassing the original intention and sense of their first writers – the meaning later revelation shows to have been Christ himself. So, for Gelineau when we pray the psalms we are answering God ‘in his own words’ (quoted in Jungman, 1965, p80) but we are also thereby being thoroughly penetrated by a mystical identification with Christ’s body, the Church (Little, 1957, p44).

### **3.2.3 Scripture**

The reading of Scriptures has its roots in the service of the Jewish Synagogue, which remained part of the life of the early Church until the persecutions of 44AD (Acts 2.46). Even after that the reading of the law and prophets remained central to both public and private Christian prayer, and all Scripture was seen (Miller, 1959, p179) as having a direct relation to prayer, be that to inspire, direct or nourish.

Having said that, the parochial prayer of the early Church seems largely to have focused on praise and prayer, involving mainly hymns and psalms and

intercessions. The practice of including readings from Scripture came from the monastic East and spread through the rise of Western monasticism (Bradshaw, 1991, p73). Where scripture was read it was the practice to read in a continuous fashion that ensured all the various books of the Bible were read right through (Miller, 1959, p266). This continuity began to be interrupted by the proliferation of saints' days and special readings, often from the lives of the saints, from the twelfth century onwards. The Sarum Offices for Advent for example were so influenced by this trend that only two days were free of special commemorations and less than two chapters of Book of Isaiah remained to be read under the old pattern of continuous Scripture reading (Hatchett, 1976, p90). In spite of reforms, the Office today still can reflect this ancient tension between reading 'in course' and reading that which seems suitable to special days and seasons, just as there can be a tension between reading for paracletic as opposed to kerygmatic purposes.

The early reforms within Anglicanism reflected the Protestant valuing of the Word of God and ensured a tradition of extensive and lengthy readings; something as novel was the alternation between readings and canticles and the contrasting reduction in the number of psalms (Bradshaw, 1991, p73). So that which was abbreviated in the Middle Ages became extended in the Reformation (Dunlop, 1953, p70). Neville Ward comments that 'certainly the best way to quench the spirit is to burden people with daily Bible reading' (1967, p17) and while by implication he is not specifically or only referring to the clergy the same may well apply for some if not most. Few clergy might deny the value of daily exposure to Scripture but the quantity of Scripture may occasionally be an issue, as indeed may be the underlying rationale for those passages allocated for morning and evening. Bradshaw has even proposed separating out the reading of all of



Scripture for study and meditation from the selection of appropriate and briefer passages for the daily Office where their purpose as liturgical anamnesis could then be liberated (1991, p77). The agenda of those who compile lectionaries needs also to be borne in mind, some if not most having been critiqued for being anti-Judaic and androcentric (Boisclair, 1996). Be that as it may, the Church continues to affirm the belief that all prayer indeed flows in response to the words that God has first spoken to us, and those words are most accessible to us in the form of the Bible.

### **3.2.4 Canticles**

Strictly this word describes hymns derived from canonical Scripture. The Magnificat (Stephens, 1849, p476) was first introduced into the Morning Office in the French Office of about 506 (found thus in the rule of Aurelian and it is also mentioned in the rule of Caerarius of Arles). In the East it remains more associated with the Prayer of Morning but in the West it saw a shift from morning to evening. By 820 it occurs in Amalarius' Evening Office in France and in England it was associated with Vespers from before the Norman Conquest. 'The Magnificat is so widely identified with evening prayer (*sic*) in Western Christianity that nobody seems to question its total lack of suitability as an evening canticle.' (Woolfenden, 2004, p212). On the other hand, the evening use of the Nunc Dimittis is common to all the Christian Churches: Greek, Roman and Reformed. Similarly the usage and place in the day of the Benedictus is both consistent and ancient. The Venite seems one of the few original Benedictine features of the Office (Ratcliff, 1932, p272) that was adopted by Rome and passed from there into the Sarum usage and thence to *The Book of Common Prayer*. The Te Deum was in use by the Church by the time Benedict composed his Rule; its authorship

remains disputed but it was known in the ancient English church as the Psalm or Song of Ambrose and Augustine. The Benedicite is an ancient hymn from the Jewish tradition - St Cyprian suggests it was long in use by the church by his time of writing, circa 390, and later the fourth Council of Toledo in 633 made its use obligatory, excommunicating those priests who omitted it. Other Canticles, such as the Jubilate and those more recently introduced by the Franciscan Office, have enriched the observance of particular days or seasons.

### **3.2.5 Versicles, Lord's Prayer and Collects**

The versicles consist of the salutation 'the Lord be with you' and what is sometimes referred to as the Lesser Litany. The former denotes the ancient transition between one part of the liturgy and another (Blakeney, 1866, p362) and introduces the responses, whether petitionary or supplicatory. Dunlop (1953, p122) dismisses the versicles and responses as a form of 'ecclesiastical back chat' but they are both remnants of earlier choral and more liturgical elements of the Office and can be seen to provide a useful exchange between leader and participant where the Office is said by more than one. The use of the Kyrie may well be a remnant of an earlier procession, introduced originally by Chrysostom to combat and compete with the popular practice of the Arians who had been forbidden to worship within the walls of Constantinople (Blakeney, 1866, p377). In England, as in much of the West, the prayers of the litany were known as rogations and survive as well in the Rogationtide processions of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

With regard to the Lord's Prayer the Didache says that Christians were to recite this prayer thrice daily (Miller, 1959, p177) whilst once again it was St Benedict who included its recitation at the end of the hours of the Office. When its

introduction was proposed for Matins and Vespers at the Council of Gerona in 517 the innovation was met with opposition by the clergy (Guiver, 1988, p171), possibly because its primary association was with private prayer and the Eucharist. In the Middle Ages its usage in the Office increased, to be included at the start as well as several times during and so it tended to lose 'its role as the peak and summation of liturgical prayer' (ibid p171). The practice of St Benedict has been restored today in *Common Worship* where the Lord's Prayer has been moved from before to after the final collects. It remains the paradigm for Christian prayer and St Augustine suggests (Weaver, 1999, p672) that its petitions establish the direction and parameters of prayer: whilst the petitions of the prayer can be expressed in different words than those provided what is prayed for cannot be beyond their limits. So the petitions of the Lord's Prayer provide a boundary as well as a shape to the matter of prayer itself.

The Collects perform a not dissimilar function of summarising and directing thought and prayer, though coming always towards the end rather than the beginning or during the time of prayer, and with far greater variety. They seem originally to have been borrowed from the Mass, becoming a regular part of the Office in the eighth century (Dudley, 1994, p37). By the thirteenth century every parish church in England was expected to have a copy of the book of Collects (Wordsworth, 1904, p123). The Collects could often be taken from that of the Mass of the day or, as in *The Book of Common Prayer*, of the Sunday preceding, uniting and harmonising the prayer of the day and tying it to the wider season of the Church's year. Even in the Office, therefore, the Collect can be seen to contain the elements of gathering up the prayers of the people as well summarising or focusing the teaching of the Lessons. Classically a Collect contains one main petition expressed in a single sentence,

‘its brevity, its conciseness, its disdain of all superfluous phraseology....soon reveals a rich mine of devotion inspired solely by the Church’s doctrinal teaching and independent of sentimentality and emotionalism.’ (Little, 1957, p78).

### **3.2.6 Confession and Creeds**

Neither of these are now necessarily a regular feature of the daily Office, though provision was and is made for it in *The Book of Common Prayer*, morning and evening. An introductory Confession follows the practice of the ancient church, though often it occurred later at the time of the Lesser Litany, and as such is commended by St Basil (Stephens, 1849, p393). The Creed was introduced by Pope Damasus 1 into the Office in about 370. St Ambrose advises its use each morning and St Augustine each morning and night (ibid, p447). The Glory be, where it is used with the psalms and canticles, is also of course a profession of faith as well as an acclamation. The entire disuse of the Athanasian Creed, now theologically and liturgically unfashionable, is also a feature of contemporary custom.

### **3.2.7 Intercessions**

In the Anglican rite these began as set prayers for the monarch, the royal family, clergy and people. This usage mirrored the ancient form of intercession that was the litany in use in the early rite of the synagogue as well as in pagan worship. In both cases the responses of the people were not essential (Guiver, 1988, p169). By the time of *Common Worship* these had been replaced by the offering of unspecified intercessions, similarly placed towards the end of the rite, often with a response included. An accompanying rubric comments that these

‘should normally be broadly based, expressing a concern for the whole of God’s world and the ministry of the whole Church. Nevertheless, where occasion demands, they may be focussed on more particular and local needs’ (2000, p58).

Saint Paul wrote of his prayer, with joy, for all in the church community when he wrote to the Philippians (1.3) and any member of the clergy today will have been asked for prayers on behalf of someone or some situation. In their respective descriptions of the character of the contemporary priest both Michael Ramsey in 1972 and then Cocksworth and Brown in 2002 stressed the importance of intercessory prayer: 'whatever else people want of us as priests, they want us to pray for them.' (2002, p103). This reflects in part Prosper of Aquitaine's dictum that 'the rule of supplicating establishes the rule of believing' (quoted in Lathrop, 1993, p9) but may well also indicate that intercessory prayer, where systematically and faithfully committed to, has the capacity to influence and shape our understanding of God (Earey, 2013, p.103).

### **3.2.8 Silence**

Of all the ingredients this may be the least referred to and the most frequently used. The Offices of Matins and Evensong in *The Book of Common Prayer* make no provision for or mention of the use of silence or pause in the flow of words. The additional Office of Compline or Night Prayer became popular towards the end of the nineteenth century, in part linked with the rise of the retreat movement, and that Office usually began with mention of a time of reflection on the day, though this was not included in the form of Compline submitted as part of the proposed 1928 Prayer Book. Silence is mentioned as a possibility after the readings of the Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer in the revisions of the 1970s, possibly influenced by the re-introduction of silence into the Divine Office of the Roman Catholic Church in their revisions of the 1960s where it was seen as reclaiming an element essential to the ancient monastic Office (Campbell, 1995, p183). This practice is continued in the *Common*

*Worship* of 2000 which also inserts the use of silence before the opening collect. This history alone might justify Forster's comment of 'poor, little talkative Christianity' (2005 p139) but there is a wider context too, of course. Christianity's identification with the Word (The Prologue of St John's Gospel) has had the tendency to associate both religious experience and expression and the divine nature with words and with speech. Scriptural references to silence are on the whole not positive, in the Old as well as the New Testaments. It was however a practice of Hellenism, with the ideal of silent and private communication with a quiet divine presence particularly being associated with the Neo-platonists (MacCulloch, 2013, p63). Aquinas speaks of silence as 'a very great sacrifice we offer to God...a very perfect disposition for receiving grace' (1867, p341). So silence can be seen not only as in opposition to speech but also as something that admits to, gives rise to and is nourished by a different kind of communication (Muers, 2004, p15). Bonhoeffer could see silence as the creative beginning for Christian speech and teaching (de Gruchy, 1999, p137). But whilst silence has been used by generations in connection with prayer it can challenge and so be a cause of resistance or avoidance. There is the oft quoted story of Jung commending solitude and quiet to an exhausted minister, who reacts with horror at having to spend time only with himself: "I can't think of any worse company." To which Jung responds, "And yet this is the self you inflict on other people fourteen hours a day." (Kelsey, 1977, p84). As Bishop David Bentley comments,

silence 'attracts us, yet quickly eludes us. We protest loudly that all we want is a bit of peace and quiet, but when we get an unexpected hour of space, we quickly look for something to fill it. Even in our churches we speak about the need for silence far more than we actually allow it. More than once I have caught myself taking longer over the introduction of a time of silence than over the actual silence itself!' (1994, p17).

The reason for discomfort may be that silence 'strips us of all the verbiage with which we habitually garland ourselves and leaves us, in a sense, naked' (Turner,

2012, p56). It may also be too big a jump from the noise and speech of the everyday to be easily accessible without discipline and practice. The avoidance of silence can however have grave effects, as Pascal comments, 'I have discovered that all the unhappiness of man arise from one single fact, that they cannot stay quietly in their own chamber' (no 139, 1931, p39). But the acceptance of silence can equally be invaluable and creative, it can move prayer and the encounter with God from the head to the heart, from praise of God to a more personal relationship with him. A recent group of ordinands discovered 'something as simple as silent meditation in the presence of God is spiritually beneficial yet all too often and easily overlooked' (anon, 2013). Campbell also comments that periods of silence 'provide a more peaceful rhythm within an Hour than a continuous verbal utterance can' (1995, p271). Silence is also of course a key ingredient in the contemplative path, by which we come to

'the discovery that, when the veils of separation drop, we see that the God we have been seeking has already found us, knows us, and sustains us in being from all eternity.' (Laird, 2011, p3).

The 1928 *Book of Common Prayer* proposed a period of silence after the General Confession during the Ordering of Priests but also explicitly forbade its use elsewhere (Lowther Clarke, 1943, p15). So on the whole silence can be said not generally to have been valued by the institution of the Church and its rubrics. Indeed even as late as the 1970s the General Instruction on the Roman Office could warn of the need to avoid silence that 'deforms the structure of the Office...(and) upsets or bores the participants' (Bugnini, 1971, p57).

### **3.2.9 Rubrics**

There remains the question of the understanding and expectation of the saying of the Offices. Canon C26 states,

‘Every clerk in Holy Orders is under obligation, not being let by sickness or some other urgent cause, to say daily the Morning and Evening Prayer, either privately or openly’ (The Church of England, 2013).

Kelsey suggests the obligation to say the Office arose in or after the fourth century recognition of Christianity, when popular ardour, no longer fuelled by persecution, cooled and it came to be seen that clergy and religious were the ones who took the responsibility of prayer from the rest (1977, p87f). On the other hand the Rubrics of *The Book of Common Prayer* suppose the presence of a congregation for the Office to be said publicly, and permit a variety of urgent causes, including the study of divinity, for it to be said privately. Blakeney suggests therefore that daily public prayer was never general in the Church of England, and supports this with the variety of Royal Injunctions requiring services on Wednesdays and Fridays (those of 1549 and 1559, repeated by the Bishop of London in 1585, and then the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1590 and again in 1596, and the Canons 14 and 15 of 1604) (Blakeney, 1866, p253f). Even in the early nineteenth century Dr Pepys, Bishop of Worcester, could write,

‘I must express my doubts, whether the compliers of our Liturgy ever contemplated the performance of the Daily Service generally in the Parochial Churches of the kingdom. Such a service is, indeed, provided for in the Prayer Book, but then it must be recollected that it was necessary to provide in the Prayer Book for the Service in Cathedrals, as well as for that in Parochial Churches of the country. ....When I consider the onerous duties which now devolve upon the clergy I could not bring myself to impose upon those, whose important functions are already so ill requited, the additional burden of a Daily Service’ (quoted in Stephens, 1849, p254).

On the other hand rubrics, interpreted in a particular way, can feed into scrupulosity. Haring comments (1983, p902) that it is not rare to encounter the scrupulous priest with an excess of observance of the rubrics, whose attachment to the pronouncement of the certain words is in inverse proportion to the degree with which they have forgotten the central principle of adoration of God in Spirit and in truth, ‘the essential dimension of the integration of life and faith’. (He even



adds that this brand of clericalism manifests the force of Original Sin). The alternative response is one of guilt, where the saying of the Office has been abandoned or its public recitation given up as inconvenient or impractical in favour of something more private and personal. Such guilt can be either appropriate and possibly creative or in reality unfounded and so likely to be destructive. The fact that there is an obligation may also for some act as a deterrent, Bishop Hensley Henson once observing that 'a rubric saying something shall be done seemed to a certain type of Anglican cleric a provocative challenge to his authority' (Earey, 2013, p.26).

### **3.3 Context: Matters psychological, liturgical and professional**

*Whether the daily Office is prayed, what is prayed if it is and how it is prayed will be influenced by a wide variety of factors and this section sets the key possibilities out. Personality is likely to be one such factor, as is the wider liturgical context of the Office itself. Finally the role of the clerical profession and its evolving identity is also explored.*

#### **3.3.1 Matters psychological**

Personality as well as history will of course play its part in the saying of the Office. In general most accept the psychological difference between the Extrovert and the Introvert, the former responding to and gaining energy from external stimulus and other people while the latter primarily responding to and gaining energy from the inner world of ideas and reflection. It is judged (Richardson, 1996, p6) that approximately 75% of the general population are Extroverts and 25% are Introverts. It has also been suggested that with the clerical population this balance of percentages is reversed (Francis, 2004, p13). Introverts, traditionally at least, have dominated the Christian spiritual tradition of prayer as well as the exercise of public ministry.

Beyond that basic psychological difference are a wide variety of psychological approaches. Eysenk's approach, offered in the Grove Booklet Pastoral Series (Francis & Robbins, 2004), was based on a set of indices of extroversion, neuroticism and psychoticism. This was not picked up for this research questionnaire on the grounds it would be much less known amongst the general clerical population. On the other hand I felt I had to include a question about the well known Myers-Briggs Typology Indicator (MBTI) with its sixteen possible personality types. Whatever my own opinion about it, it has been extensively used by diocese and spirituality courses. It too uses the notion of Introversion

and Extroversion but extends to include additional ranges between Sensing and Intuition (the poles of the spectrum of the function of Perceiving), Thinking or Feeling (the poles of the spectrum of the function of Judging), and the attitudes of either Perceiving or Judging (Duncan, 1993), each combination with its own strength and weakness with regard to prayer and spirituality. Charles Keating (1999, pp21-31) uses the same typologies but starts from the range of experience of Christian spirituality, selecting four key approaches and allocating four grouped personality types to each one. For Keating though (p127) not all personality divisions are so clear-cut; some can be borderline in one area or another with consequent effects on the experience of prayer. Others may have been influenced and shaped by long exposure to strong traditions of prayer which, for good or ill, may have affected their 'natural' preferences. Indeed as Francis and Robbins note, much of the work of the clergy is shaped for extroverts (Francis, 2004, p13). Still Jungian based, but perhaps less didactic, is a model adopted by Richardson (1996), who argues that contemporary spiritual choices or preferences are psychologically undergirded and fall into a fourfold pattern. These four ways, articulated as a journey, are those of Unity, Devotion, Works and Harmony. This is a less reductive and static approach but still clearly links some types with certain ways.

Enneagram workshops and retreats have also enjoyed nearly as much popularity for the clergy as Myers-Briggs workshops and so this way of seeing and understanding personality difference must also be considered. The Enneagram (Riso, 1987, p7f) comprises three Triads, each with positive and negative traits, and depending on whether the psychological orientation of the individual is to do with the emotions or with the ability to act or with how one relates to the world. Depending on the breadth and range of response, all of these may be factors to

be considered in how people experience and utilise the prayer of the daily Office. More regarding these approaches is explored in Appendix II below but this material may or may not prove of use or interest in the light of the responses to the questionnaire.

So much categorisation can give rise to suspicion that the desire to quantify personality traits overrides the need to respect differences in both causation as well as experience. Moreover none of these approaches seem to include much appreciation of any social or cultural aspects, for after all Witvliet, among others, suggests that all Christian worship is shaped by culture, in a process of 'contextualisation, indigenization, acculturation, and inculturation, whether self-conscious or inadvertent' (2007, p274). This does not necessarily provide any clearer liturgical direction or focus in an age when different parts of contemporary culture are moving in different directions (Earey, 2013, p.27). As well therefore as an expected variety of understanding and practice Ouspensky (1951, p14) speaks of the detrimental nature of western individualism and this may well have its own effects on how prayer has come to be seen by the church and its clergy. Additionally, in this country, as throughout much of Europe, there is a tendency to restrict freedom of religion to freedom of worship (Trigg, 2013) and to sideline religion as something only or largely private and personal. Whilst resisting the implications of this position the clergy may well also be influenced and shaped by the underlying narrative, unquestioningly coming to inhabit the belief that prayer is inherently an interior matter even if they do not go quite as far as to assent that 'religious faith is necessarily subjective, being incommunicable by any kind of proof or evidence' (Lord Justice Laws in the Court of Appeal, quoted in Trigg, 2013). On the other hand, for Panikkar (1973, p1) the process of secularisation can save worship from being meaningless, as secularisation, being the temporal

aspect of reality (ibid p10f), offers the chance for the regaining of the real, the claiming by humanity of that which was previously monopolised by the sacred and the religious. Panikkar suggests that secularisation is an ever recurrent process repeatedly manifest in almost all cultures. In his view the Semitic religions tend to have a particularly negative view of time and of that which is contingent but that secularisation actually offers a way of integration. It is also possible that some ministers of such a Semitic religion as Christianity might respond accordingly, being culturally and unconsciously influenced either to abandon the saying of the daily Office as irrelevant or to cling to it as part of a package of denial; or it may still be that for others the contemporary challenges of secularisation could stimulate a greater and deeper engagement with patterns of prayer. Another take on this would be an understanding of religion, with Durkheim (1995, p37) and others (Torevell, 2000, p1), that embraces the division of the sacred and the profane, one of the mechanisms for the preservation of this separation being the liturgical performance of sacred rites. Contemporary psychological insight suggests that the notion of the unconscious, individual and collective, might usefully be introduced here. For Durkheim also goes on to say (1995, p415) that there is however no ultimate radical discontinuity between sacred and profane, pure and impure, and, so here too, that which is conscious and that which is unconscious. Liturgy may help maintain the separation but also can permit each to be manifested – religious forces can work for both separation and integration, for good or ill, and so are thus both intense and powerful, requiring respect and precaution. The forces held within the unconscious can be transformative, though to a variety of different ends depending on whether they run unchecked or are redirected:

'An impure thing or an evil power often becomes a holy thing or tutelary power – and vice versa – without changing in nature but simply through a change in external circumstance' (1995, p413).

Durkheim in talking of impurity is referring to biological experiences such as menstruation and the dead but could equally well apply to that which has been suppressed or repressed in the psychological functioning of the shadow.

### **3.3.2 Matters liturgical**

The Office is part of the wider task of liturgy, and for the clergy at least a very significant part. Pickstock argues that the whole task of liturgy does require the act of praise that is itself 'dispossessing' (1998, p177). This 'dispossessing' is an appropriate losing of the sense of ego self which involves a lowering of defenses and a relinquishing of habitual patterns, so ultimately involving a certain personal as well as communal 'ungating' (1998, p29). This 'ungating' of course underlines liturgy's capacity for creative transformation and conversion as well as the potential for danger. One of the things that can go wrong is when protective restraints or prohibitions are lost, as happened with the Ranter Sect in the sixteenth century (Furlong, 1975, p59) and the Nine O'Clock service in the twentieth (Howard, 1996, p5f). Another danger is when there is a breakdown in any wider understanding or corporate belief that has sustained a previously coherent system, 'comprising a certain number of sacred rites and beliefs in relations of coordination and subordination' (Pickstock, 1998, p38).

Liturgy, to be authentic and sustainable, requires then to be anchored, its goals protected. This might be, horizontally as it were, in study and theological reflection on the one hand and in work and action on the other; whilst being grounded vertically in an appropriate vision of and encounter with the transcendent God above and in an authentic interior life beneath. Thomas

Aquinas, in writing of beauty, requires the three essential characteristics of integrity, proportion and clarity (1989, p451), and these might serve as an articulation of the necessary balance for liturgical actions to function appropriately. Willimon on the other hand proposes that integrity for worship requires theological, historical and pastoral norms (1979, p21), a range that should also be taken into account. Some contemporary liturgical writers may claim that 'our liturgies should be understood properly as ends and not as means' (Westerhoff, 1978, p91) but if the ultimate vision of the Triune God is no longer the rationale for life and worship, if liturgy is insufficiently rooted in history and corporate practice, and if it is unrelated to the life and ministry of the one praying the liturgy then further dangers will lie ahead.

Liturgical recitation and repetition, which are primarily actions with words attached, because they are so habitual and familiar rarely if ever catch the attention or invite examination (White, 1983, p95). Even when all is well the openness liturgy promotes in the human soul, individual and collective, can lead to the influence of other more negative forces and so invokes the necessity of personal and corporate discernment. For some the repetition of prescribed liturgical texts may even work to support a culture of conformity and acquiescence and tend towards the re-enforcement of the status quo: injustice, danger or imbalance is therefore the more likely to go unchallenged (White, 1983, p102). Part of liturgy's distinctiveness is of course that it tends to be tightly structured and controlled so unless form, content and inspiration are appropriately balanced its natural characteristics of 'formality, conventionality, stereotypy and rigidity' (Torevell, 2000, p24) will be over emphasized; and unless it is clearly linked to a greater vision and understanding its radical and liberational aspects will remain unrealised.

The opposite reaction to over conformity is rebellion and Tillich speaks of the 'vanguard' (Tillich, 1954, p95) that can form which presages a change of power. Liturgically the Oxford Movement in nineteenth century England is one communal witness to this. For an individual, on the other hand, rebellion may take the form of stopping the discipline of daily prayer or of altering its form out of all (institutional) recognition, a move that, depending on the circumstances, might be creative for some and destructive for others.

So liturgy always operates on more than one level, personal and communal, spiritual and psychological, individual and societal;

'Ritual operates on those levels of existential reality that undergird the conceptual. More importantly, ritual points to and participates in that primordial truth which is located at the expanding edge of our horizon of knowing' (Westerhoff, 1978, p132).

Liturgy moreover has to be considered against the backdrop of clerical self perception.

### **3.3.3 Matters professional**

In 1711 Joseph Addison wrote of divinity as one of the three great professions, all overburdened with practitioners (quoted in Crook, 2008, p12). As Jacob points out profession was an emerging term in the early eighteenth century and he cites both Bayley's *English Dictionary* of 1721 which defines a profession as an occupation and Samuel Johnson in the fourth edition of his *Dictionary* in 1773 who notes that 'the term profession is particularly used of divinity, physick, and law' (2007, p1). Technically, as Jacobs goes on to suggest, no profession fulfilled the full criteria for being a profession until the 1830s although the clergy of the established Church had many characteristics later seen as defining a profession, both before and after the Reformation.



There are different theories of what precisely constitutes a profession and how a profession comes about. Crook suggests (2008, p11) professions began with the rise of specialists during the medieval period, with clergy, physicians and surgeons, jurists and bureaucrats and then ambassadors and armies. Russell additionally proposes (1980, p6) that one can articulate a staged evolution for professions from a pre-professional occupational group through to the acquisition of certain professional characteristics through to a full profession. Some would argue that a formal association should necessarily follow but most anyway would agree that all professions would share some or most of the traits of

‘an extended and systematic preparation with an intellectual component taught in an institutional setting that upholds quality and competence; an expectation of its members to observe norms or codes of conduct; an emphasis upon service to others ahead of personal reward; an expectation that its members will demonstrate a high level of personal integrity’ (Crook, 2008, p16).

However though the ancient constitution of the English Church was little changed at the Reformation and continued to provide the framework within which bishops and clergy worked, the role and perception of the clergy changed dramatically. Indeed the clergy were transformed by the Reformation for although they were less differentiated by function than their medieval counterparts (Pettegree, 1993, p1) the reformed view of the minister stressed the individual rather than the office. As a result the life, preparation and vocation of the minister rose greatly in importance (O'Day, 1981, p55) and so ultimately the clergy had to be far better selected, trained and supported than their predecessors. The role of the institution in responding to this shift in understanding and meeting the needs of the moment shaped not only the clerical profession and what was required of it but eventually the other core professions that were later to follow suit: ‘In fact the pattern of a national body, with regional branches, to oversee training, admission, supervision, and discipline of its members, was the model adopted by other

professional bodies from the 1830s to provide a nationwide service' (Jacob, 2007, p315).

It has additionally been suggested that the period from 1870 saw 'the long century of the professional' (Crook, 2008, p23) when the classic professions, including the clerical one, enjoyed an apparent (and no doubt retrospective) heyday. This was at the point in fact when, in this country, the established Church, still firmly rooted in a rural and pastoral vision of England, was proving itself ill equipped to adapt to the socio-economic forces that had brought about the rise of the great urban centres and their accompanying poor. This failure that was largely matched a century later when post war immigration offered a further opportunity for evangelism and witness. In part as a result of these failures, and of wider cultural shifts, there has been a questioning of the definition of clerical professionalism that has tended ultimately to be male, hierarchical and western and so conditioned and limited (Lunt, 2008, p88). For contemporary questioning has not only been philosophical: a societal decline in trust and respect, the rise of bureaucracy and monitoring and accompanying uncertainty and stress have all played and continue to play their part. These changes have been summarised by Lunt as including

an 'altered relationship between 'professional' and 'client' and the growth of 'consumer' power and client empowerment, and a less deferential and better informed public' (2008, p75).

A contemporary parallel with the period of turmoil seen in the sixteenth century could here then well be argued, with its accompanying uncertainties and loss of confidence. As Russell suggests, (1980, p28) the effect of the Reformation in that century was to 'de-professionalize a role which had developed some aspects of professionalization in a traditional society'. This was a communal 'ungating', to use Pickstock's term, and could also be paralleled with developments today. In

the sixteenth and seventeenth century it led to gains, primarily in the realm of education and training but also to some degree in greater care in selection, increased systems of information and reporting and so supervision and the period saw also some advancements in the realm of finance and remuneration. These improvements were of course then to help define and shape the later formalisation of the clerical profession as the Church has come to experience it in the eighteenth century and beyond to the present. In contrast the latter half of the twentieth century saw a rise of managerial trends and so may be witness rather to a process of over-professionalism. The effect then of this century's 'un-gating' on the Church and the clerical profession may well be as unsettling and challenging as to what went before although it remains unclear as to what the gains might be and where developments might lead this time around. This could possibly have both negative and positive implications for the Office – negative in that the prayer could sit less well with a clerical state seen in more purely professional terms; positive in that any questioning of what it really means to be a priest might lead back to the Office as a source of identity.

## **Chapter 4 Data Exposition**

*In this chapter I set out the research strategy and then the questionnaire that was utilised. With the latter a summary and explanation of both the questions and the range of responses received are provided, reporting any resulting speculation that arose. An evaluation follows of both the questions and the responses in the light of the latter's usefulness and relevance to the research question.*

### **4.1 Research Strategy**

The research question coalesced around the exploration of the usage, understanding and theology of the Office today and was limited to Anglican clergy, actually in the end those clergy of the Church of England. A questionnaire was chosen as the most practical means of eliciting both quantitative and qualitative data and ethical approval was sought and granted from King's College for this approach and for later interviews should these prove necessary or helpful. Once the questionnaire had been drafted ten clergy were approached for comment and feedback and the questions and format of the questionnaire were refined in the light of what was received back. At the same time, an opportunity sample being decided upon, a variety of strategies was used for accessing and approaching the clergy, which approach took place mainly during September and October 2012. The main rationale of the initial approach was to target dioceses holding a residential conference in 2012, on the basis that the questionnaire completion rate would be higher if it was presented both personally and in paper format, with time for completion and a deadline of the conference's end for return. It proved impossible to elicit a response from some dioceses and two who did respond indicated that the questionnaire and its content were not appropriate to their conference theme. In the event both Exeter and Southwell dioceses tabled

a paper copy of the questionnaire at their clergy residential. Guildford diocese emailed its clergy instead of tabling the questionnaire, the resulting reduced response confirming the value of a personal introduction, as well perhaps as lack of structured time for completion. Two other organisations agreed to email electronic copies of the questionnaire to the clergy on their database. Both organisations were contacted personally, the researcher being a former trustee of the one body and former staff member of the other. Sion College was the first, a London based voluntary association of clergy from four dioceses though mainly drawing its membership from London and Southwark; and the South-Eastern Institute of Theological Education (Seite) the second, being a non-residential theological training for ordination. 271 questionnaires were completed and returned, the spread of respondents being as follows (the total of 99% here being because of figures being rounded up or down):

Exeter – 90 responses out of a possible 200.

(A 45% response rate and 33% of the total received)

Southwell – 39 out of a possible 213

(An 18% response rate and 14% of the total received)

Guildford – 9 out of a possible 300

(A 0.03% response rate and 3% of the total received)

Sion – 95 out of a possible 240

(A 40% response rate and 35% of the total received)

Seite – 27 out of a possible 390

(A 0.07 response rate and 10% of the total received)

Source unknown – 11 or 4% of the total received

The majority of questions were quantitative (34 questions out of a total of 42) and the answers were processed accordingly - data recording and analyses were

performed using SPSS version 21. With regard to screening, the data was tested for normality and this was subsequently achieved. Participants displaying answers which were not considered to be genuine were eliminated. Pearson's Correlation is the name of the test used, correlation being significant at the level of 0.01. Correlations were implemented to detect similarities in answers. To account for multiple comparisons, the significance level was set at  $P < .05$ . Regression analysis was used in order to assess moderation or medication effects. Significance levels for all tests were 2-tailed. A summary of the results of the test for correlation in table form is given as an appendix.

The qualitative questions generated however a much greater volume of words, covering both experiences and opinions and here the nature of the responses were grouped as far as possible and in the reporting below they are ordered from the most to the least frequently cited. The themes that emerged from the data and the process of correlation are presented and discussed in the following chapter.

## **4.2 Questionnaire and Response**

The questionnaire comprised 6 sections and began with the following explanatory preamble:

The clergy of the Church of England are required by Canon law to pray the daily prayer of the church known as the Office (usually some kind of Morning and Evening Prayer). It is known that not all do so but it is unknown what the percentages involved are of those who do and those who don't. This research by Andrew Walker, based out of King's College London, aims to establish the proportion of clergy who do pray the Office daily, how they do so and what effects they believe prayer, or its cessation, may have on their life and ministry. It is hoped this research will benefit both theological training for clergy and for those preparing to be ordained as well as providing an opportunity for individuals usefully to reflect on patterns and reasons for their daily prayer. The confidentiality of all taking part will be protected. If there is insufficient space provided for any answer feel free to continue on the back page or a separate sheet.

The questionnaire began by eliciting personal information (section 1), continued with the nature of ministry exercised by the respondents (section 2) and then

briefly invited information regarding personality type, where known (section 3). The main part of the questionnaire was devoted to the respondent's experience of the Daily Office, exploring the pattern of their prayer; and its type, source, mode and location (section 4). It is at this point that the research methodology switches from pre-dominantly quantitative to qualitative, and verbatims are used in my reporting. The same questions were asked of those who reported as saying or not saying or no longer saying an Office. Both groups were asked their opinion on the purpose of the Office and its effects and ingredients (section 5). General questions about life and ministry (section 6) concluded the questionnaire. For each group of respondents the questionnaire involved just over thirty questions.

### **Section 1: Personal Information (Questions 1-4)**

1.	What is your age?	_____ years
2.	In what year were you ordained as a deacon?	
3.	In what year were you ordained as a priest?	
4.	What is your gender?	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female

The questionnaire began with a series of questions to elicit basic information. Only one sent the form back uncompleted on the grounds that these particular introductory questions, if answered, could enable a violation of confidentiality. The age of those who did respond to the questions ranged from 29 to 87 with an average age of 54. 182 or 67% of the respondents were male, and 89 or 33% were female.

This compares with the general statistics of the Clergy of the Church of England (Church of England, 2013) which identifies also an average age of 54 (49 for stipendiary clergy, 59 for part time or self-supporting though not including the retired clergy who were partly represented here). The statistical range for gender produces the equally comparable figures of 69% male and 31% female. Since of the questionnaire respondents only 3% were retired the parallel nature of the statistics between those for the national church and this suggests the opportunity sample can be regarded as fortuitously representative.

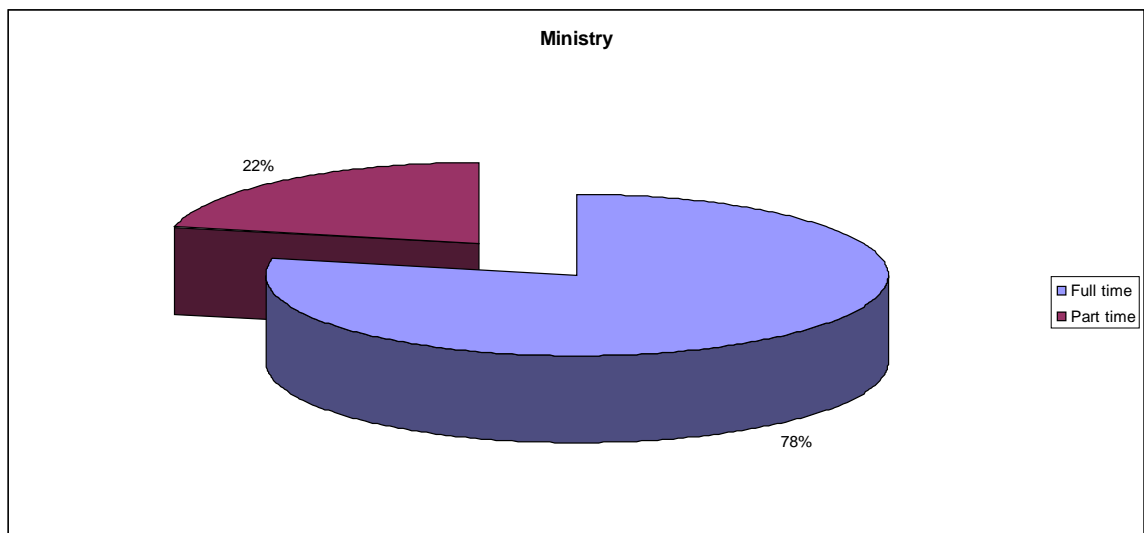
The questionnaire was piloted by being completed by eight very different clergy known to the researcher, and they commented extensively and usefully on the phrasing of some of the questions. However, after the completed questionnaires began to be received it was realised that in this initial section some significant questions had been omitted. Reasons cited for a change in the practice of prayer included marital status and the presence and absence of children, which were not addressed in this section. Training and formation emerged as significant factors and the theological college or course attended prior to ordination were not elicited. Nor was ethnicity addressed, although the incidence of black and minority ethnic as opposed to white nationally is only 2.8% and this suggests it may not have been of sufficient significance to a limited research project such as this.

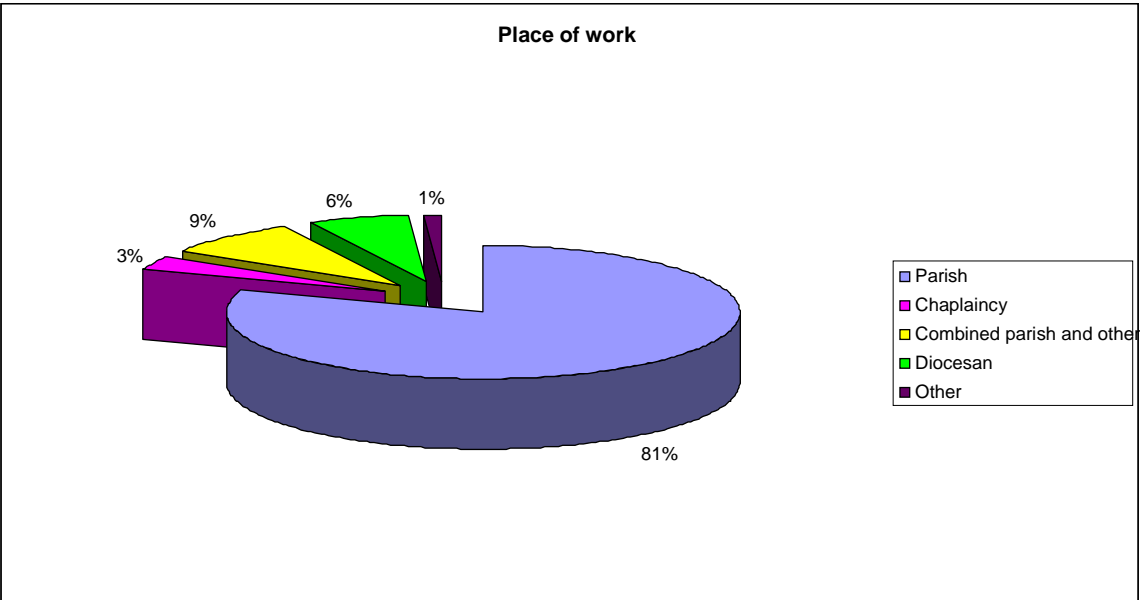
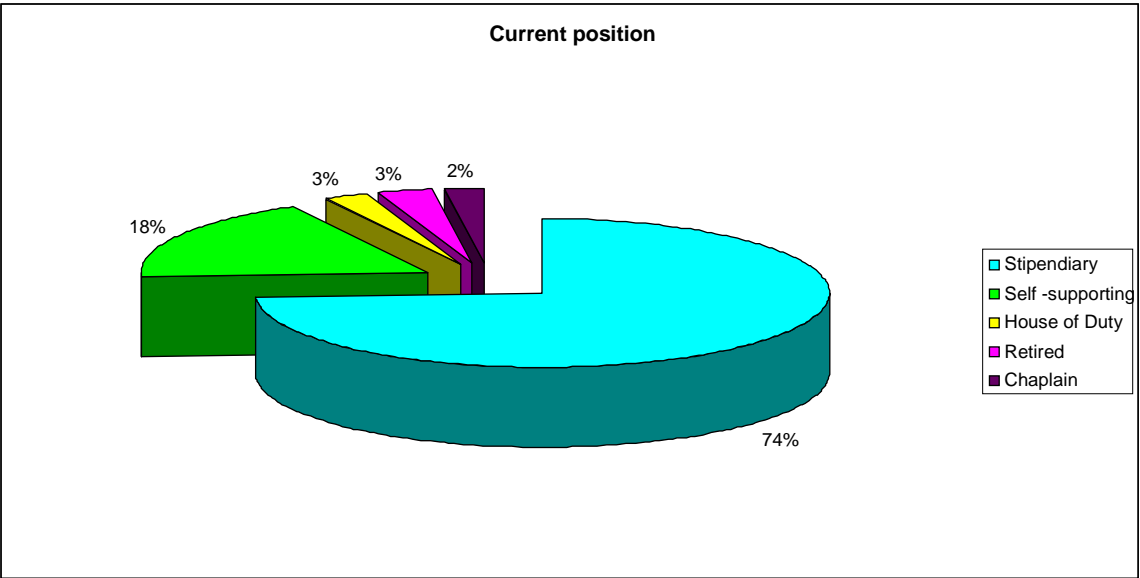


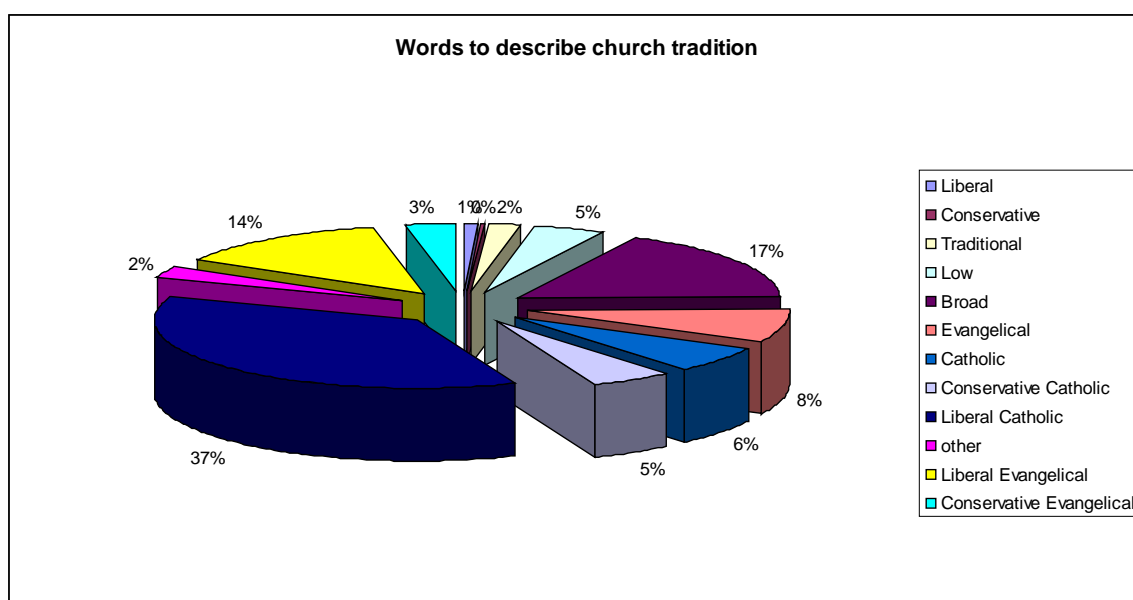
## Section 2: Nature of Ministry (Questions 5-8)

5.	Is your ministry...	.... Fulltime .... Part time
6.	Are you....	.... Stipendiary .... Self-supporting .... House for Duty .... Retired .... Other (please specify)
7.	Do you work mostly in....	.... Parish .... Chaplaincy (please specify kind of work)  .... Other (please specify)
8.	Which words might you use to describe your church tradition? eg liberal, conservative, traditional, high, low, broad, evangelical, charismatic, catholic etc	

The answers to these can most clearly be presented by pie chart:







In the pilot part of this research the strongest reaction received in the feedback was to this question and the request to select the word that might most nearly describe the respondent's churchmanship, with the choice being between 'high, low and broad'. This was followed by a qualifying question to select either 'liberal, conservative, traditional or charismatic' as terms which might also act as a present descriptor or qualifier. In the light of the feedback the question was cast much more openly as can be seen above. In the event 76 different categories were received back, and to make some sort of an overview possible they were reduced down by using only the first three descriptors given. As well as the more traditional categories aforementioned the range included, *'Evangelistic Liberal Catholic'*, *'Low charismatic open evangelical'*, *'Liberal, evangelical, charismatic, catholic'*, *'Broadly evangelical/charismatic with catholic tendency'*, *'Radical Catholic'*, *'Liberal Catholic/progressive emerging'*, and *'Flexible/missional'*.

This fact, combined with the strength of opinion from the pilot questionnaire respondents, perhaps indicates a desire not to be too narrowly pigeon holed or labelled by the clergy as well as expressing a need to have individual

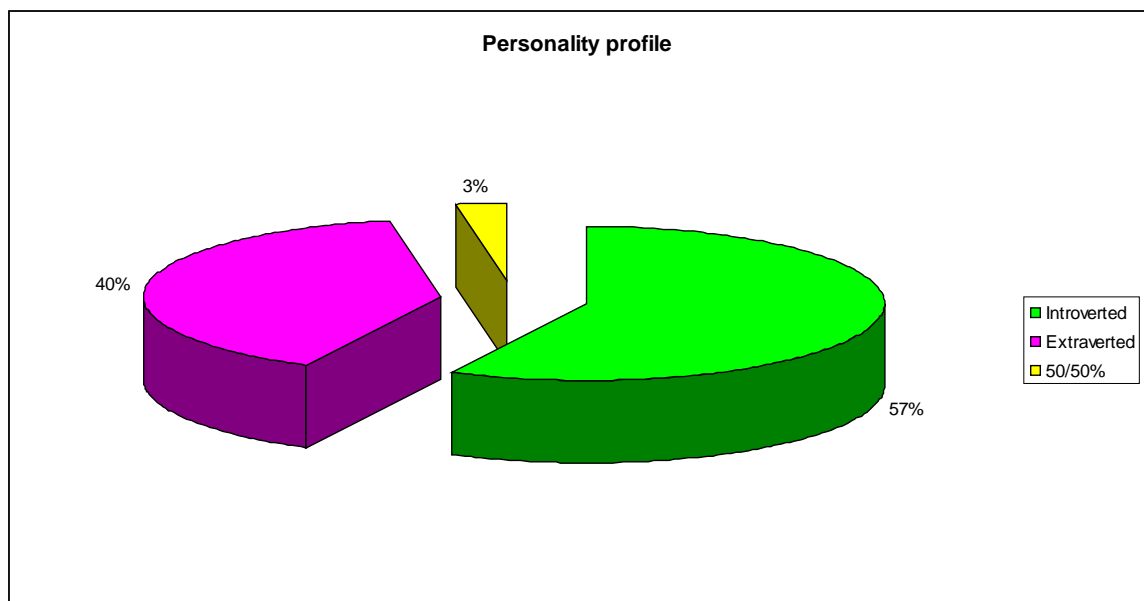
perspectives on ministry and theology named and recognised. To explore this further would seem to be of interest, if not directly relevant to the research question in hand. Alternatively, or additionally, a seemingly inconsistent use of labels or categories may be a form of resistance to the usual binary oppositions - particularly perhaps in the current climate of division and party - such as traditional versus liberal, high versus low, catholic versus evangelical, or biblical versus progressive. The traditional tri-partite division of the Church into high, low and broad would seem to be no longer relevant, replaced by a much more fragmentary view of ministerial or religious identity. Another possibility may be that this indicates some identity confusion at a deeper level and even a lack of certainty and confidence in the nature of priesthood and ministry. This last speculative point may perhaps be of later relevance to the exploration around the saying of the daily Office.

### **Section 3: Personality (Questions 9-11)**

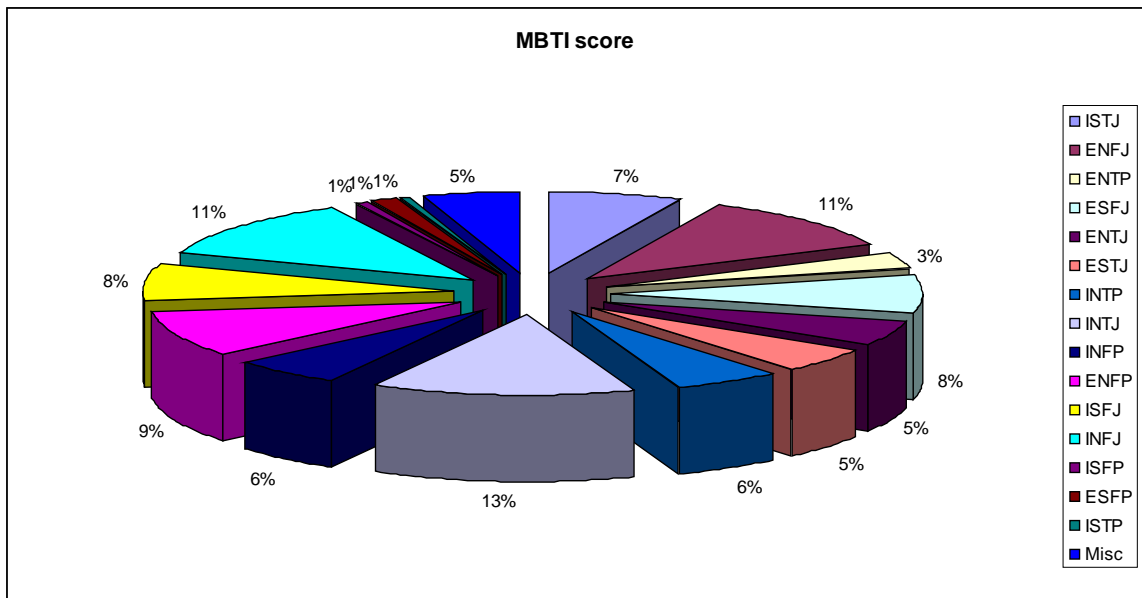
9.	Overall, do you think of yourself as more...	<input type="checkbox"/> Introverted  <input type="checkbox"/> Extraverted
10.	If you have attended a Myers-Brigg (MBTI) personality type workshop and recall your type please write it here....	
11.	If you have attended an Enneagram workshop and recall your number please write it here....	

The next section looked at the question of personality. Myers-Briggs workshops have often been offered or recommended in the past by many dioceses and

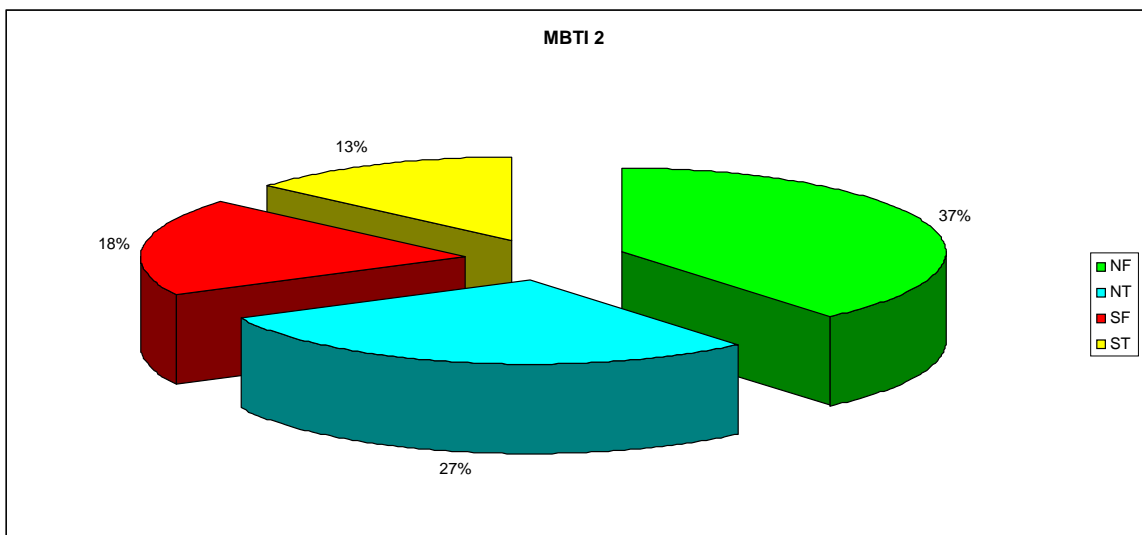
some theological training courses. The Enneagram has also been offered or recommended at times and has been the focus of some retreats. These were therefore selected for their likelihood rather than for their superior credibility or reliability. In both cases only those who attended and who appreciated any insights received would necessarily recall the letters or number offered as their descriptor so the questions were phrased accordingly. Additionally the researcher judged that the language of introversion and extroversion was sufficiently well known and un-attached to any particular school of psychometric testing or of personality theory as to justify asking about it separately. This lexical hypothesis (Open University, p299) appeared to be borne out by the response of 263 or 97% of the total as opposed to the Myers-Briggs question which received only 160 replies or 59% and the Enneagram question which received only 33 replies or 13% of the total.



This proportion is close to that suggested for the clergy by Francis (2004, p13).



Jung himself focussed mainly on four of these, within the overarching distinction of introversion and extraversion. His articulation of intuition (N) as opposed to sensing (S) and feeling (F) as opposed to thinking (T) would simplify and clarify the above as follows:



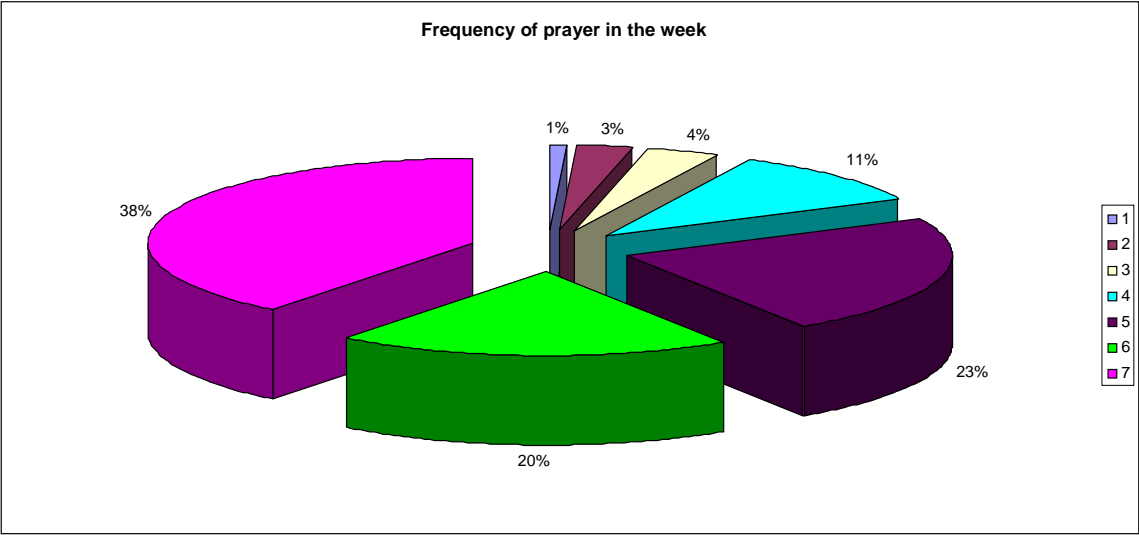
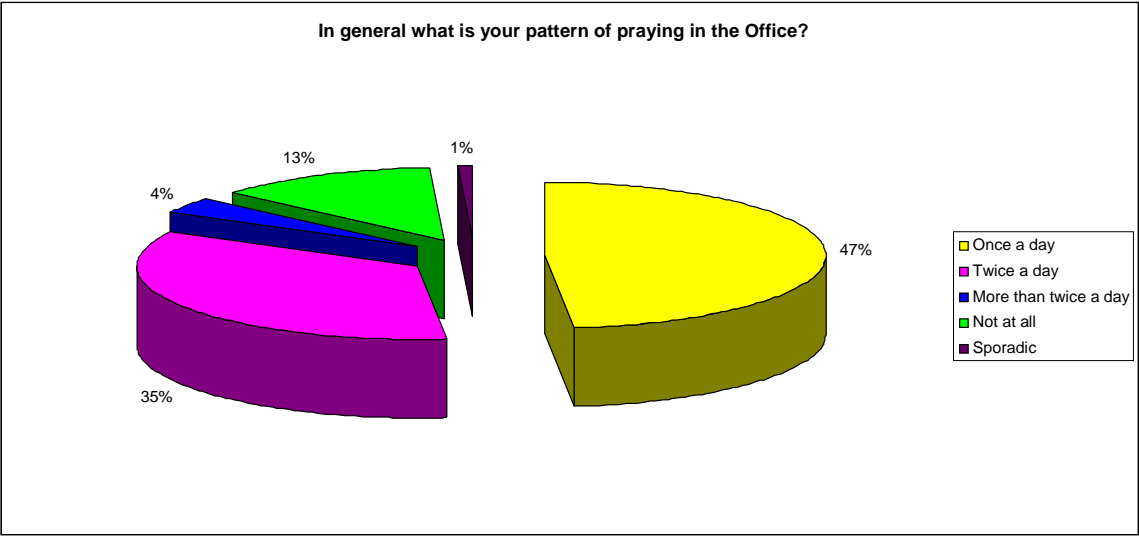
An illustration of how a particular type might react could be found in one respondent's comment that *'I find the office quite alienating - over wordy, designed by and for one class of people'*. But it does also raise the possibility of class, which none of the questions asked here addressed.

## Section 4: Experience of the Daily Prayer ('Office') of the Church (Questions 12-32)

12.	In general, what is your pattern of praying the Office? -Eg would you normally say it once or twice a day or more? - And how many days a week usually?	<b>if you do not regularly pray a daily Office please go to question 22</b>	
13.	Do you usually say a daily Office on days off?	Yes/No	
14.	And when on holiday?	Yes/No	
15.	What type of daily Office do you currently pray?	.... Common Worship .... Franciscan .... Roman Breviary .... Book of Common Prayer .... Own devising .... Other (please specify)	
16.	In general, what source do you use?	.... Prayer book .... Phone App or other electronic device .... Memory .... Other (please specify)	
17.	In general, what mode(s) do you use?	.... Said .... Sung .... Both Said and Sung	
18.	In general, how do you pray it?	.... Out loud .... Silently .... Both	
19.	In general, where do you pray the Office?	.... At home .... At Church .... Other (please specify)	
20.	Most often, do you pray the Office alone or with others?	.... Alone .... With others (please specify)	
21.	If there have been significant changes in your practice over the years please explain of what nature (please write as much as you like)		

The responses to the question regarding frequency of the prayer of the Office covered both within the day and within a week. As can be seen a very high percentage, 85%, reported themselves as praying the Office on a daily basis, be that once, twice or more than twice a day. A lesser percentage of respondents

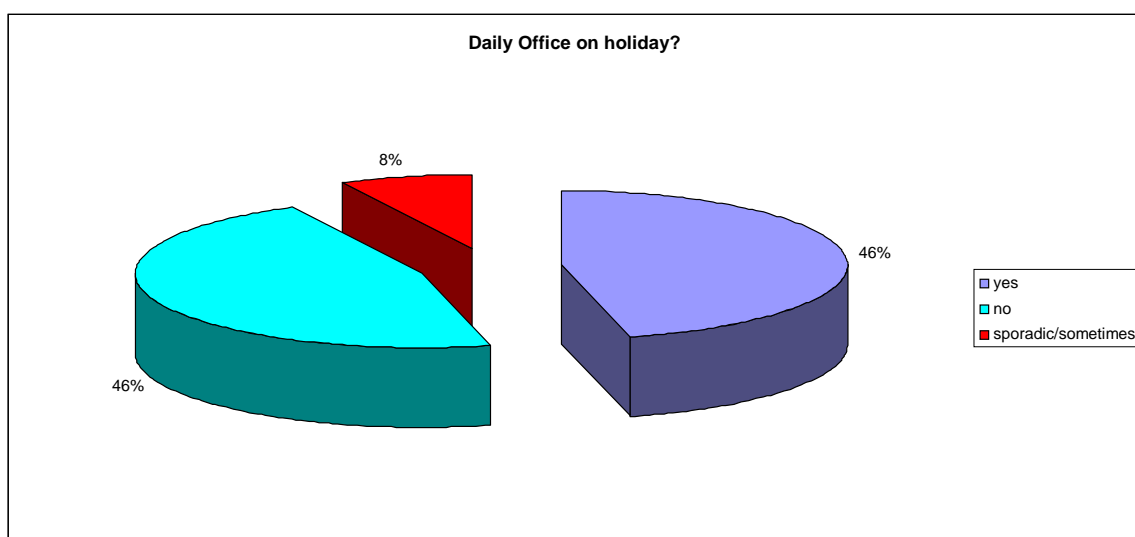
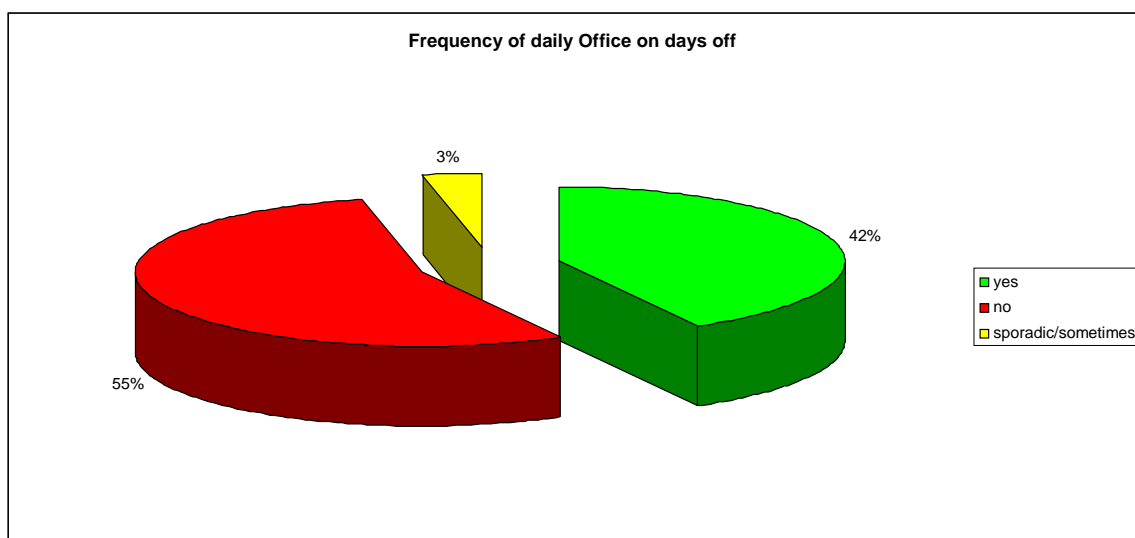
answered the second part of the question, 81% as opposed to 94%, but still the largest group prayed the most frequently in the week.



Those who responded as not praying the Office comprised 13%. It should be noted that it is more than possible that those who do not pray the Office would be less likely to agree to complete such a questionnaire in the first place, so these figures cannot be taken as necessarily representative even of the diocese and clergy groups approached. This group was asked the same series of questions as those who reported as praying regularly, but focussed on the time when they did, if they did, pray the Office regularly. In fact all had in the past prayed a daily Office of some description. What was omitted from this were the questions regarding frequency of prayer so an opportunity was missed to trace any possible

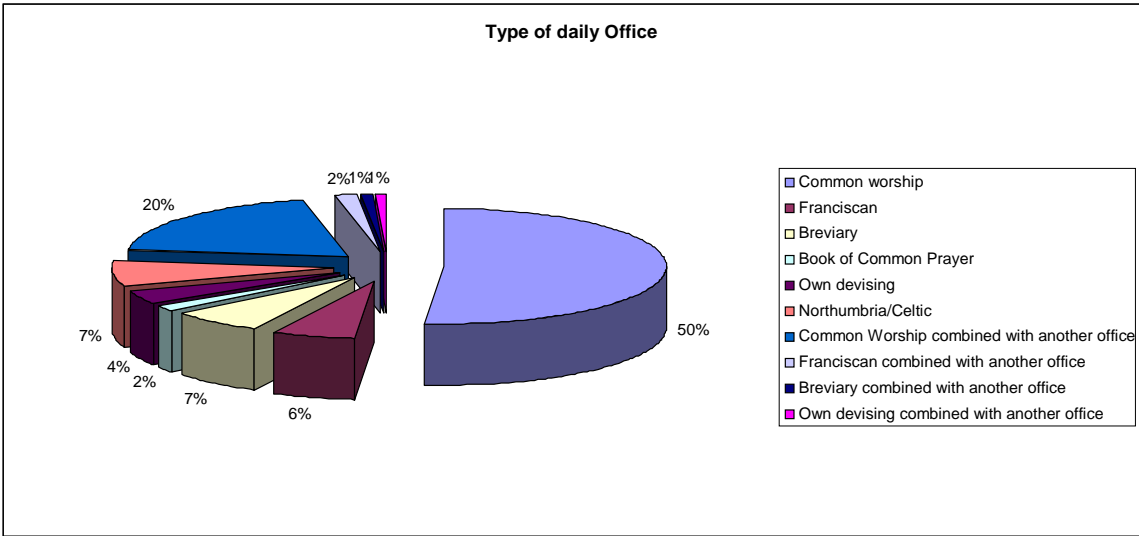


pattern or reason for stopping the prayer of the Office that might have thereby been revealed. Their responses are reflected on question by question below, additional to the responses of those who do continue to say a daily Office.

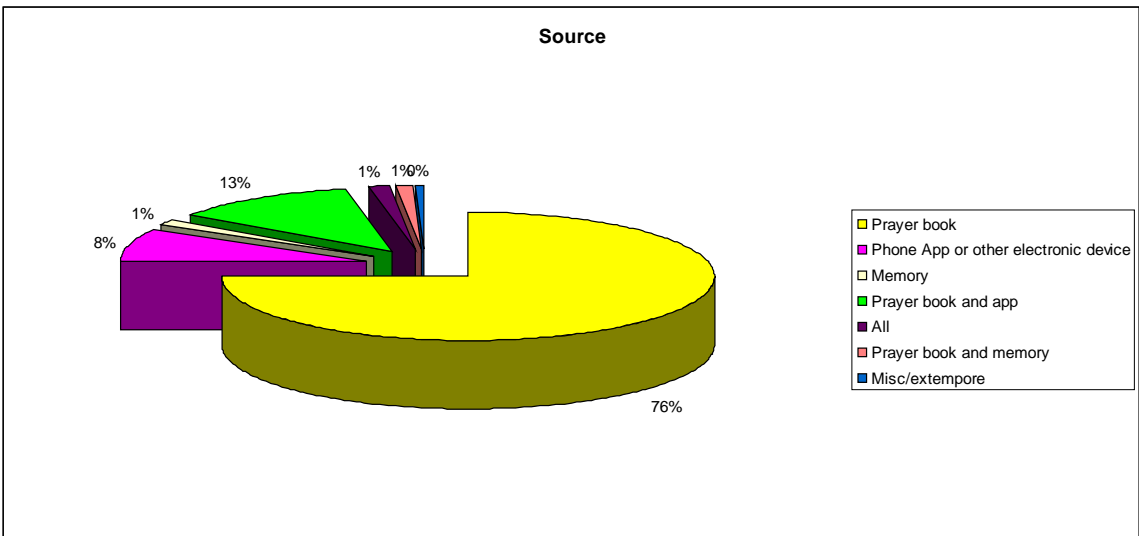


One possibility that initially occurred to the researcher was that the Office might be regarded as part of the clerical working life and so be mainly associated with working days rather than time off or away. This however is not borne out by these responses, for while a majority do not pray the Office on days off an equal number do on holidays. The later comments on the purpose and meaning of the Office also support the notion of the daily prayer as much about personal growth and relationship with God as about ministry and the working life of the clergy. Another possibility that could be raised here is the question of habit. Or the

responses to these two questions could imply that the momentum of praying five or six times a week, whilst flowing around any day counted as off, carries on during more extended periods away.



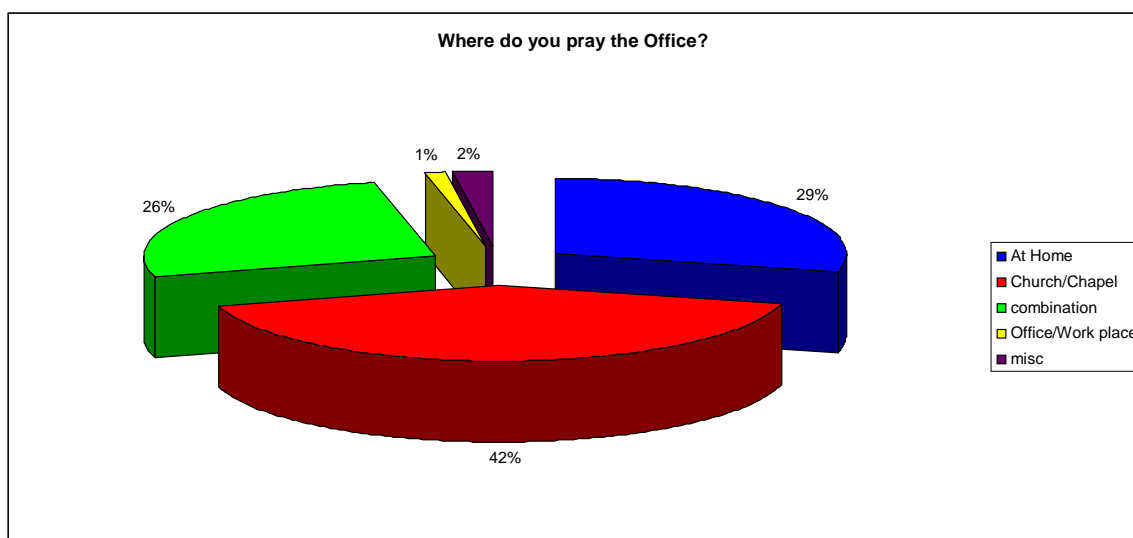
It can be seen that some 71% use *Common Worship*, either alone or supplemented by other material. This is comparable to the 77% figure (20 respondents out of 26) for the previous usage of those who no longer pray the Office. A high degree of conformity can therefore be proposed. Additionally though the 35% of respondents who have worked to combine material from different sources should also be noted.



A high proportion of respondents, 89%, use a printed book for their daily prayer, mostly only a book. This is comparable to the 100% figure (26 out of 26) for the

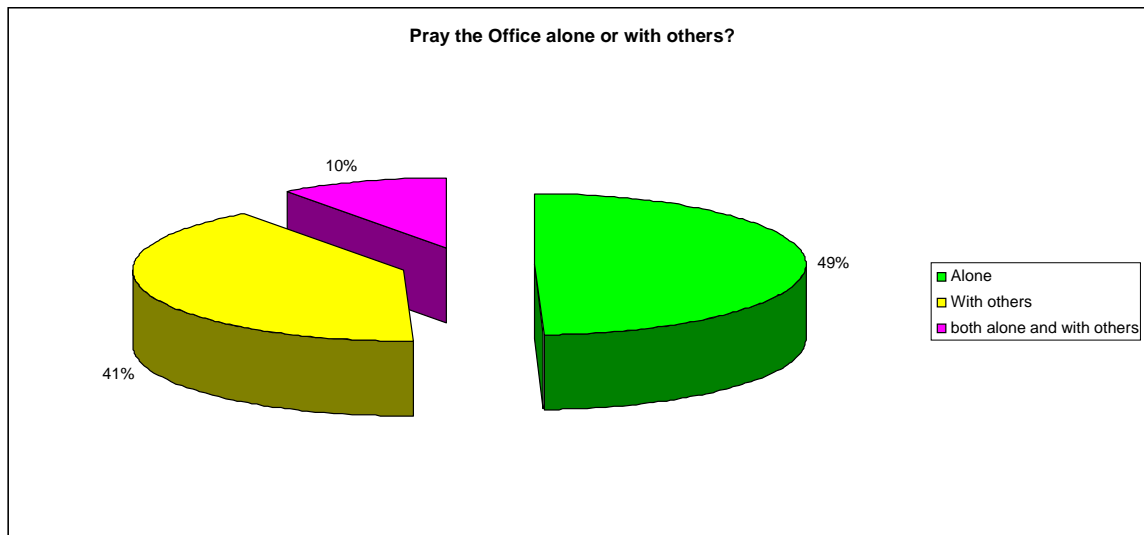
previous usage of those who no longer pray the Office. 21% though are using a phone app now and its ease of use is commended a number of times, *'the easy availability of the Office on Smartphone from the CofE website is a big bonus for times when not in church and don't want to cart books around.'* This option of course would not have been available to those who once did but no longer pray an Office, so it is likely this number will only continue to rise in the coming years. It is at this point of the questionnaire that quantitative began to give way to qualitative data and comment could both be given and can be included here in reporting on it.

Respondents were then invited to respond about the modes and methods of their prayer of the Office. The figures for the responses of those who do and those who did pray the Office are here combined since again, as before, they are comparable in pattern and proportion of response. 83% say the Office while 16% sing some parts of it. 49% say the Office out loud, 15% silently, 36% both. One commented, *'I've also found that chanting the Psalmody slows down my mind, not just the words we utter'.*



A roughly similar range and proportion was again reported by those who no longer pray the Office in both this preceding and the succeeding question. Amongst accompanying comments were, *'I wept when I was told in London that I*

*wasn't allowed to say it in an unlocked church on my own', 'I also believe churches only grow when people pray in the sacred space of the church buildings: it claims that space for God and offers all concerns daily to the God who loves and cares'.*



51% or 117 respondents here reported as to the saying of the Office with other people, in part or always. Of the 62 who expanded on their response 23 or 37% of this figure said the Office with colleagues (other clergy and Readers), 17 or 27% prayed it with laity, 16 or 26% with both colleagues and laity, and 6 or 10% with a husband or wife. Later comments on this topic included, *'When saying it alone it seems against what it is for (corporate)', 'I can say it with others but it doesn't work for me as a solitary experience', 'I find that the nature of the people with which you say it changes the experience', 'Difficult to be motivated in isolated situations', 'I find it very helpful to pray the Office with others. I think that we need to regain the ancient tradition that it is the prayer of the 'laos'. It presents a real 'mission' opportunity for those who are seeking greater depth and who are looking for some form of rule/way/rhythm', 'It should be offered to the public and breakfast should be served with it'.*

The final questions in this section varied according to whether the respondent continued to pray a daily Office or not. For the first group there was an invitation

to comment on any significant changes that may have occurred in their practice of the prayer over the years. For the second there was an invitation to comment on the factors that may have influenced their decision to stop.

### **Significant changes in practice? (Question 21)**

Respondents were asked about any significant changes in practice. This was a very broad question, perhaps overly so in the light of what came back. But it was asked in such a way as to permit any broad themes to emerge as necessary that might not have been elicited by other more focused questions. To summarise the response, with the more frequently cited factors listed first, external reasons for changes included change of job, of parish, or for some the arrival or departure of children. The issue of company in the prayer was also adverted to: *'Becoming a community member changed the regularity of prayer.'* This could also be when moving from a place where prayer with others was the norm to one where praying alone was the reality, or vice versa: *'I said the office far less frequently until I had a colleague join me in my last parish, when we agreed to say it together'.* The price, though, of praying with others was for some the usage of a form of the Office that did not necessarily suit, so a move, even to a more isolated context, could mean more freedom of choice and a more suitable form of the prayer: *'I have to endure 3-4 years of Ecumenical Morning Prayer order of service which is a mix of liturgies. I never thought I would say it but I miss saying the Benedictus every morning!'* Illness and the pressure of work were other factors mentioned: *'In more recent years these other times of prayer have often been squeezed out by work demands and sheer tiredness'.* Also mentioned were the desire to experiment, make changes: *'Use different resources, changing every 6-18months'.* Also adaptation: *'for many years I used the CCP morning*

*and evening prayer but I have recently changed to using Common Worship morning prayer on my iPad because the readings and psalms are all there for me.'* And, finally, more interior reasons for change were around an increasing dissatisfaction with the wordiness of the Office, especially that provided by *Common Worship*. For some there was the accompanying desire for greater simplicity: *'Sometime just having a time of silence with prayers - and conversation with God - when things have gone wrong - saying sorry - sometimes having a good moan "thanks for being with me".'* And for others a desire for more silence, within a continued appreciation of the structure provided by the Office, was another motivator: *'I find I like the structure of the different elements in it but I allow myself to leave parts out if I want time just to be quiet before God.'* The context of the Office emerges here as the most critical element along with issues of temperament and the experience of and desire for silence.

### **Influencing factors in stopping? (Question 30)**

Many of the themes mentioned above re-appear here as factors named in influencing the decision to stop praying an Office: change in circumstance, lack of community or company, busyness and tiredness, and the finding of the Office as repetitive or overly wordy. The reasons for cessation therefore are not different but the common themes seem to reveal a spectrum of experience. At some point along this spectrum, with a particular combination of circumstance, history and perhaps personality, an individual will make the choice to adapt, endure or cease their daily pattern of praying the Office. All those who responded here anyway have a continuing experience of prayer which is seen by them as different from an Office. This ranged from more active forms of prayer such as Scripture reading or Lectio Divina, use of the Examen, journalling through to more

contemplative forms of prayer such as silent meditation, time alone with God. Only two reported their experience of prayer as irregular and spontaneous. Finally of this group 22 or 36% felt ceasing praying the daily Office had been beneficial for them, so: *'Great improvement', 'Hugely liberating', 'definitely improved my relationship with God and my ministry as a priest', 'It's dead boring! Found it didn't foster community nor help spiritually'*. On the other hand 22 or 36% felt it had had a negative impact, so: *'Not doing it leaves me less focused', 'Feel less grounded in my worshipping life', God-time starved; less connected to the written word and to the wider church at prayer'*. 6 or 27% were ambivalent about it or felt it was of neutral impact, so: *'Stopping praying the daily office has made no difference to my ministry as a priest', 'the breadth of Intercessory Prayer has diminished, but amount of scripture read has increased'*. The same elements would seem to emerge here, of context and of temperament and experience, reinforcing the conclusions drawn in the previous section as to their particular significance in the saying of the daily Office.

**Section 5: Opinions about the purpose, effects and elements of the Daily Office (Questions 33 to 39)**

33.	Overall, what do you understand as the purpose of a Daily Office?		
34.	How do you think praying a Daily Office has affected your relationship with God?  Please tick or add your own statement as appropriate	.....It helps me feel closer to God .....It reinforces my sense of the divine in everyday life ..... It enhances my wider experience of prayer .....other:	
35.	How do you think praying a Daily Office has affected your ministry as a Priest?  Please tick or add your own statement as appropriate	.....It makes me feel part of the wider church .....It helps my experience of God in the everyday .....It gives me strength and undergirds my ministry .....other:	
36.	How do you think saying a Daily Office has affected your personal development?  Please tick or add your own statement as appropriate	.....I feel it strengthens my sense of myself .....It helps me reconcile life's difficulties .....It gives me the space to grow as a person .....other:	
37.	How you would rate the following possible rationales of the daily Office?  Please tick those you personally consider most important.	____ as consecration of time ____ as the Church's offering ____ for priestly formation ____ an articulation of salvation history ____ for personal discipline	
38.	How you would rate the following ingredients of the daily Office?  Please tick those you personally consider most important.	____ Psalmody ____ Intercession ____ Scripture ____ Confession ____ Canticles	
39.	How you would rate the following possible forms of prayer with regard to the daily Office?  Please tick those you personally consider most important.	____ Praise ____ Meditation ____ Supplication ____ Contemplation ____ Contrition	

The first question here regarding the purpose of the Office was a deliberately open one. This took into account that the following questions were all more



structured, with a selection of given sentences as well as the possibility of adding material. It was placed first within this section so as to have introduced as little of the questioner's material and agenda as possible. The result of such openness, and that every respondent made some comment here, meant that the answers amount to nearly 3000 words in total. Those who had found the Office unhelpful and had stopped using it made occasional comments in this section, and these comments have already been included above with the responses to question 30 regarding factors influencing their decision to stop. Analysis of the rest of the contributions can be summarised under the six main purposes articulated, with percentages included:

**Re corporate/connection.** 32%: *'a sense of being part of a wider Church', 'the corporate prayer of the church', 'praying with and for the church', 'to carry others in prayer and be carried by others in prayer', 'it enlarges my appreciation and awareness of the needs of others'.*

**Re rhythm/time.** 17%: *'two still points in an otherwise frantically busy day', 'to dedicate the day to God, to give thanks for the day', 'grounding every day in and with God', 'it gives me a reason to go into church itself each day, part of the rhythm of its life'.*

**Re worship/relationship with God/offering.** 16%: *'to nurture a relationship with God', 'it enables us to join the eternal worship of heaven', 'taking time each day to bring ourselves to the realisation of who God is', 'to meet with God, learn from God, listen to God'.*

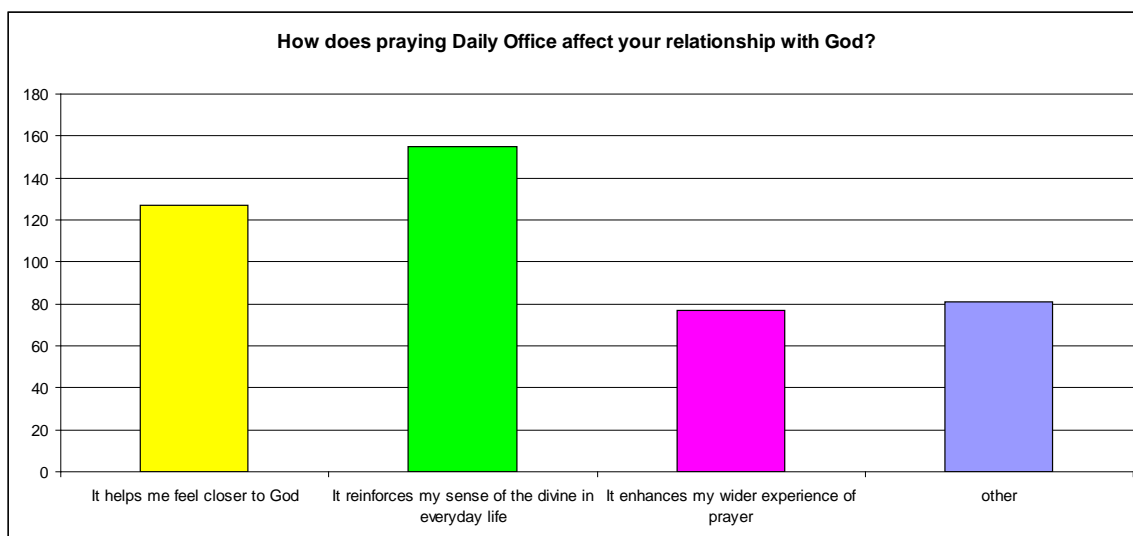
**Re ministry, formation, habit.** 14%: *'this is part of my priestly role, it is something that holds me', 'spiritual formation', 'I could be cynical and say brainwashing', 'habit forming to sustain me even when I don't feel like praying', 'to ground me and my ministry in something other than myself'.*

**Re discipline.** 12%: *'a disciplined structure regardless of how I am feeling', 'Ordinal requires it. It offers a disciplined approach to prayer and worship. It provides a framework for freedom', 'it disciplines me...I feel guilty if I miss it', 'without it, I am merely an "operative", with it I am a son and empowered by His Spirit'.*

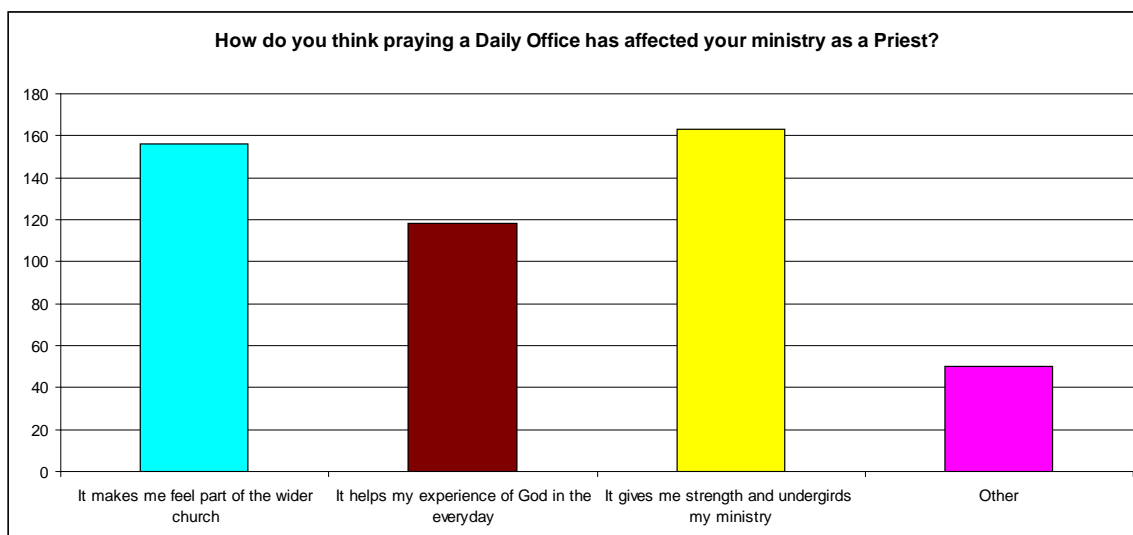
**Re scripture.** 9%: *'to be grounded in scripture', 'reading the whole of scripture – that's why I use my own lectionary and cover the whole Bible', 'it ensures I continue to listen daily to the scriptures', 'following the lectionary means that we cannot avoid the "tricky" bits, but bring everything we are to God'.*

The percentage differential in favour of the first of these will need to be returned to. In the previous exploration of the different ingredients of the Office the intercessory element was not one that stood out nor is identified particularly when the Office is presented to those who might use it by the institution of the Church. And while the notion of the Office as corporate prayer is regularly asserted in any theological discussion its practical application in the appreciation of intercessory prayer is generally disregarded.

The following questions focused the respondents on different possible aspects of the daily Office, regarding their relationship with God, with ministry, with themselves as well as the different possible rationales for and ingredients of the Office. With pre-selected statements provided the responses here are more easily displayed by bar chart:

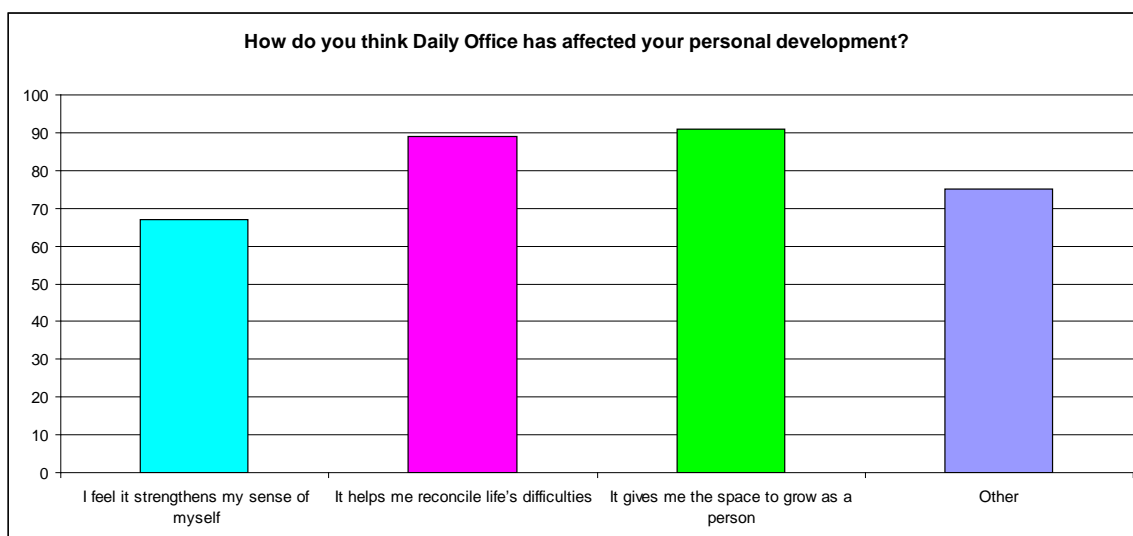


Many of the comments that were added here were variants of the three originally offered. Amongst the additional ones included were, *'Gives me a way of praying when my relationship with God is angry or distant'*, *'It gives God space to sometimes drop a bomb into my complacency or routine'*, *'Keeps me questioning as I face the awkward images of God from the OT, that one might otherwise avoid'*.

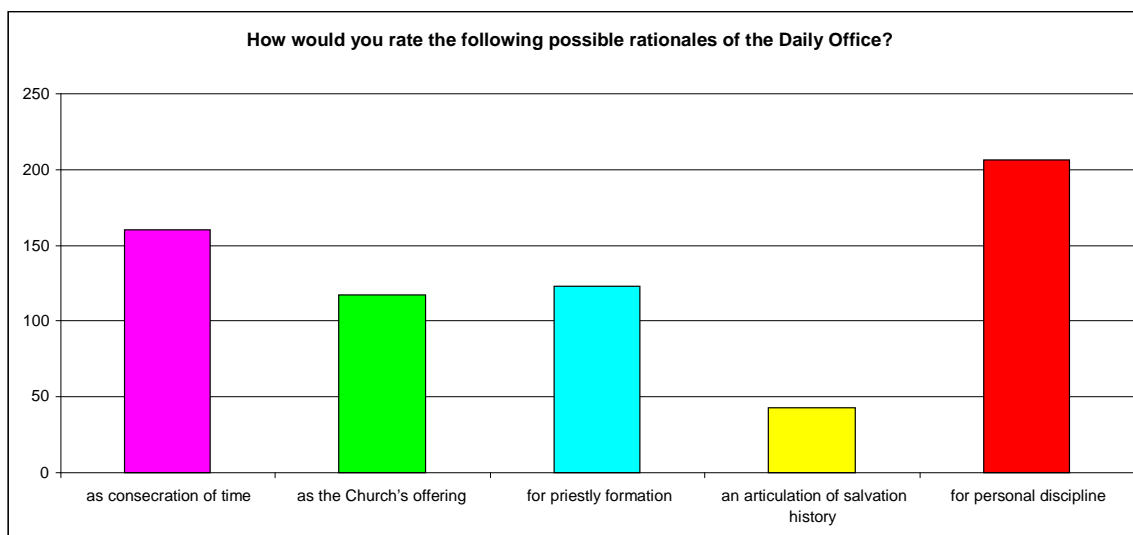


Additional comments here included, *'I am reminded, especially when I say an office with others, that I am part of the priesthood of all believers, part of the communion of saints'*, *'It gives me a structure to my day and a variety to my prayer life'*, *'It has bonded me with colleagues'*, *'It reminds me that priesthood involves obligations as well as opportunities'*, *'If I have done nothing else for the*

*good that day, I believe I have done the most important work of the day by saying my prayers, however imperfect that offering is'.*



Additional comments here included, *'By exploring possibilities it is turning a duty into a joy', 'Has helped me to feel rooted', 'It challenges my perception of how things appear', 'It so often sheds light and wisdom on a current issue', 'It enables me to 'shape' my day', 'It reminds me to be a bridge not a car-park'.*



On the consecration of time: *'Morning prayer sets the tone for the day and centres my thoughts. Things are not right if it is missed for whatever reason. The routine and space give a rhythm. Evening prayer commends the day to God and gives time for reflection', 'For me the Office is an important discipline. Morning*

*Prayer gets the day going on the right foot and Evening Prayer can help to put it all into perspective'.*

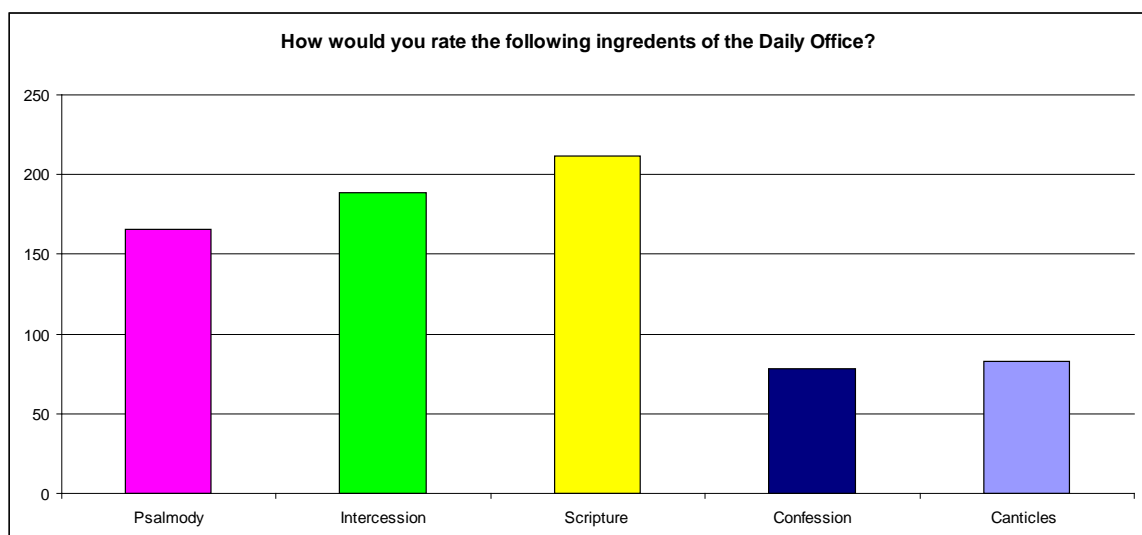
*On the Church's offering: 'I really appreciate knowing that throughout the world at every moment others are offering similar words to those I am reading. This underpins all that we try to do individually in our own little patch', 'No Evangelical churches seem to say the Office regularly, despite often having a large staff of ordinate people. They usually have a staff prayer meeting on a weekly basis, which has a Bible study unconnected to the Lectionary readings or the liturgical year'.*

*On priestly formation, 'I am convinced that all ordinands should be trained in praying the Offices so that it becomes habit. Praying is hard, especially in difficult times. When extemporary prayer won't come because of feelings of sadness or inadequacy the Office steps in. It is a prayer of the church and for the lonely parish priest it is a link with the world as we all pray with and for one another', 'Saying the Office has been at the heart of my vocation and formation', 'I am always grateful that praying the Office became a central part of life early on and was reinforced at Theological College and through curacy', 'It totally anchors my ministry', 'When I was training I found it extraordinary how few ordained and staff regarded the Daily Office as an integral part of their lives, and post ordination how few of my Evangelical colleagues see it as relevant', 'I believe Daily Office or Prayer should be a necessity and part of a minister's life, it should not be enforced'.*

*On personal discipline, 'The discipline of saying the office when tired, depressed, overworked, doubting and all those other times that ministry brings has been very important - bringing me through the rough and back into the smooth', 'Generally, it is not attended by any great felt experience of God. It is my commitment to Him*

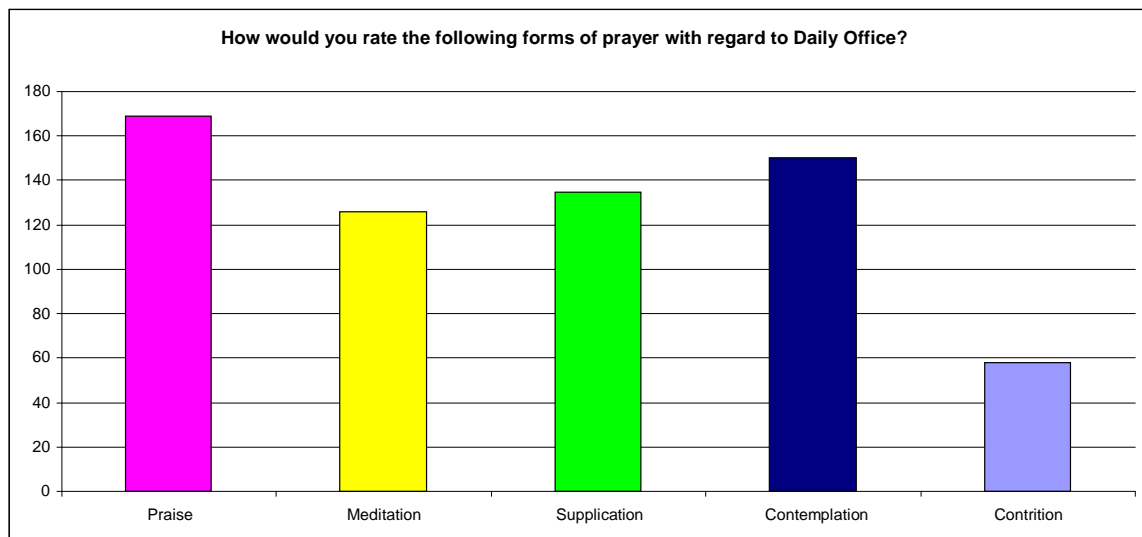
- an analogy that comes to mind is to do with eating a healthy breakfast'. 'I see it as fundamental. I'm the sort of person who needs discipline. Without the office I would barely pray at all', 'It is both a discipline and a privilege', 'It's not been a part of my previous church's tradition and obedience to our vow to say the office daily is a source of some 'guilt' to me', 'Not always easy to do. Often I think 'oh I'll give it a miss today because I need to get to the day job'. But if this is the case it may be that my ministry is an additional [?] rather than part of who I am. In that respect the daily office may be seen as a statement of intent'.

Significantly no comments arose that could be seen as a contribution to the understanding that one of the rationales of the Office is, or at least was, an articulation of Salvation history, a key suggestion of Woolfenden (2004, p32f) .



Scripture in general more than Psalmody in particular stands out here. The high ranking of Intercession also suggests an Office that is seen as other focused rather than one that is purely personal. 'It is amazing the number of times the Psalm readings speak to me and are relevant to the day', 'Find the psalms and canticles can be uninspiring', 'I find that the Psalmody especially speaks to my situation - to challenge, admonish in whatever circumstance I find myself. In the office, I find He speaks to me', 'My knowledge of scripture is largely due to the

*sustained reading of it in a disciplined way through the Office', however 'Doing is more important than content'.*



The ranking of praise suggests that ingredient of offering to God may be seen as of higher importance than personal or ministerial formation. The low rating of contrition here, and confession in the previous question, stands out. One respondent however took the trouble to comment, *'Confession is personally important to me and that is a disappointment with Common Worship that there is no regular prayer of penitence set'*. It should be noted that the *Common Worship* Office has been around insufficiently long for any absence of provision there to explain or be the cause of a low ranking on these tables.

## Section 6: General questions about your life and ministry (Questions 40-42)

40.	What do you find most enjoyable about your ministry?
41.	What presently gives most meaning to your life?
42.	Is there anything you would like to add about your experience of or thoughts about the Office?

Again, respondents were generous in their responses to these particular questions. The first two of these questions were asked with regard to a possible later interview – both to help the researcher make his selection of those whom to approach in the first place and to give some purchase to the dialogue in any interview itself. The last question was to ensure that any further opinions or unaddressed aspects about the saying of the Office could be captured – and to give the respondents freedom with regard to the final word.

### **Question 40: Most enjoyable about ministry?**

Responses here, summarised in order of frequency, covered mainly being part of a faith community and working alongside and with others; the nurturing of other people's faith; pastoral encounters and conducting the occasional offices; leading worship and preaching; the variety and often unexpected nature of life in ministry. Whilst those clergy who are burnt out or dispirited may well not have chosen to complete a questionnaire such as this, the evidence of a high level of motivation and of enjoyment amongst those who did respond is certainly striking.



#### **Question 41: Meaning to life?**

Responses to the second question, again summarised in order of frequency, covered mainly family, faith, friends, ministry, pets, as well as exercise, sex and music. It may not be surprising but the high proportion of those who mention faith and also ministry here was striking – life and ministry not seen as completely different but intimately linked. This overlap can be seen to triangulate with the notion of the Office not only as an aspect of the clergy's working life but also as a valued part of their personal faith journey.

#### **Question 42: Anything to add?**

This question was aimed to permit respondents to articulate anything they felt had not been requested or covered so far. Some of the responses here were repetition of points made or covered elsewhere. Those that were additional had aspects of affirmation for or challenge to the practise of the Office, with some practical suggestions, and so are included here and will be drawn upon again when we turn to the matter of looking ahead to a possible Office for the future.

They comprised:

*'Jesus only prayed all the time everywhere because he prayed some of the time somewhere '*

*'It can sometimes be that 'step too far' in a busy tiring life'*

*'All may, some should, none must'*

#### **Appreciations:**

*'Gives denominational identity'*

*'I cannot imagine how anyone functions or worship without daily prayer'*

*'It has taken many years for the Office to become a vital part of my life, but I could not do without it now'*

*'It is often begun with dullness but frequently ends in engagement'*

*'It keeps me sane'*

*'It's been my constant in my often polarized and hectic ministry'*

*'Like a familiar pair of shoes - that you put on - and walk to new places'*

*'Probably it has helped me to hang on in there...'*

*'I find it holds me, and is more of a blessing than a chore'*

*'I think in general the Office is a way in which God's values and ways seep into your life - you are not usually conscious of this at the time you say it'*

*'I love it because it is so scripturally based and it distils the best of how we can express ourselves towards God from down through the ages'*

*'It's the daily "de-brief with God" that matters'*

*'It brings stillness into a somewhat chaotic existence - A strong anchor'*

*'The Office was a useful means of accessing God when my spiritual life had gone dry but I found it an inadequate means of developing and sustaining a deep relationship with God'*

*'I can't imagine ever not using it'*

#### **On aspects of repetition:**

*'As someone who gets bored easily with repetition (in that I feel I am just saying words 'parrot fashion' if I am not careful), I would value some more variety in the Office'*

*'I could live without it; and certainly wouldn't miss it if it wasn't part of the routine of expectation. Having said that, I do quite like the repetitive rhythmic element of it, and the way it makes me pray in a structured way. I like order in my life, so it complements the Eucharist, which is my preferred choice for worship'*

*'I used to find CW Daily office too wordy, but I now find the repetition of the words helps to still me'*

*'It suits a particular style of spirituality. I find that repetitive liturgy stops me engaging with God on a deeply personal level'*

*'Sometimes I find it too formulaic; sometimes I find it restful because of the set pattern'*

#### **Suggestions:**

*'It needs to be replaced by supportive guidance on how to sustain one's own life with God, and how as a priest to allow that to feed and support others'*

*'Generally too wordy'*

*'It would be good to craft an office that is not so dense/has more space/possibilities so it can more easily become communal prayer not primarily vicar's stuff'*

*'It would be good to have everything within the one office book'*

*'Meditations and Reflections to aid lectionary readings please'*

*'I wish Common Worship books were more aesthetically pleasing - a serious point - and I miss the variety of hymns offered by the Breviary'*

*'Deficiencies of lectionary - jumps about too much'*

*'A lectionary for those who only do one office each day would be useful'*

*'The "requirement" should be replaced by a more varied commitment to daily prayer and study'*

## Chapter 5 Data Interrogation

*In interrogating the data a wide variety of connections emerged – male respondents being more extravert than female, more women being part time than men and so on. Those deemed to be most relevant to the research question here are those that are focused on in this chapter and lead onto a further exploration of four key emerging themes: the public and private nature of the Office; the evangelical take on it; issues of formation over against training for the priesthood; and how might we then define an Office.*

Among the connections revealed by the process of correlation those deemed to be of most interest and relevance here were those where there was a relation between the answers about prayer (do/don't, frequency, type of office, source, purpose/rationales etc) and those with regard to gender, age, job or psychological profile. From these the following emerged most clearly:

- Prayer in the week? the older the respondents are, the more frequent their prayer is
- A daily office on days off? Evangelicals and younger people do not usually say their daily office on their days off
- A daily office on Holiday? Evangelicals and younger people do not usually say their daily office on their holidays
- The forms of prayer within the Office? The older the respondents are, the more contrition is valued

The data regarding patterns of prayer seemed the most significant of the trends to emerge and if evangelicals are, numerically at least, a growing constituency in the church today then, combined with the parallel natural resurgence of young over old, it would seem likely that the restriction of the usage of the Office to the working day, and not on days off or on holidays, is likely to become the rule, rather than the exception, over time.

What may lie behind this trend? The evidence is that the Office remains valued and for most clergy prayer and life are well integrated – the daily prayer of the Office cannot be said to be seen in only ministerial terms, associated with being at work. One possibility is that the Office is both more public than expected as well as being more occasional. Its association with being the prayer of the Church therefore means many may say and value it when they can say it in church, usually with others or the possibility of others, but not when they are alone. The former of course happens to coincide with when they are ‘at work’, the latter with when they are on a day off or on holiday, so that being ‘at work’ is not a cause but a correlation. The evangelical take on this may well be nuanced and this will need to be established. Behind this may also lie what was modelled for the clergy when they first became aware of this form of prayer. Debates about preparation for ordination over the last decades have focused on the choice and difference between residential theological colleges and non-residential theological courses. The latter of course are on the rise, mainly for financial reasons, and that is a trend likely to continue. Parallel discussions have juxtaposed the differences between formation and training, the former judged to be more likely at a college, the latter necessarily more the focus of a course. Inevitably exposure to the prayer of the Office will be different for ordinands praying it corporately day in and day out, morning and evening, for two to three years in term time to those praying it only weekly or occasionally when they come together, since the prayer event comprising the communal worship of a theological course will vary extensively and only at times be recognisable as an Office.

Emerging themes then would seem to be the issue of the public and private nature of the Office, the perspective of the evangelical, the notion of formation

and training that may lie behind many people's present practice and perception of the Office, and what precisely defines an Office. These themes are explored now in greater depth so that the trends identified can be re-evaluated and a freshly articulated rationale for the Office as a whole can be used to suggest a way of approaching and using the Office for the future, which will comprise the chapter succeeding this one.

## **5.1 Public and private**

Prior to this research I would have thought that the public and collegial aspects of the Office were more theoretical than anything else. A classic statement of this understanding could be for example,

'our relationship in prayer is one in which we join our prayer with that of the whole Church, living and dead, worshipping God, commending each other to his mercy, and, above all, praying for the perfection of our communion with both God and each other, without which things remain radically incomplete' (Perham, 1980, p128).

Aspects of the text of the Office also clearly articulate this communal dimension: the nature and language of the various responses for example, be that Morning Prayer's invitation 'O Lord, open our lips' and its response 'and our mouth shall proclaim your praise' (2000, p30) or Night Prayer's 'Our help is in the name of the Lord' (2000, p81). However whilst the theological and liturgical arguing for the Office as public prayer is both ancient and consistent I would not have reckoned that this aspect of the Office would have registered much with its main users today. This attitude is obviously now proved to be more of a comment on my own personal perceptions and approach than anything else. There are three aspects of the public that are reported by respondents, one of which could be described as physical and the other two metaphysical. The first is the fact of those who are actually present, where the prayer is in company, most often with

colleagues lay or ordained but occasionally with a husband or wife or members of the congregation or a member of the public, so *'it anchors and enables my regular communication with colleagues beyond staff meetings', 'meet with others', 'the public saying of the Office enables others to be part of the daily activity of the church'*. The second is the awareness of others not present and the use of that awareness in prayer for others in intercessions, so *'part of the worldwide, never-ending cycle of prayer', 'praying for the parish', 'bringing needs of the sick and people whom I have on my heart', 'to pray for the need of the world, the parish and the people I love'*. The third public aspect of the prayer is that the fact of praying the same as others was articulated by some respondents as of importance and use: *'Joining in the prayer of the wider Church', 'praying the Office unites me with Christians throughout the world and throughout time – there is a real sense of timelessness about it', 'being in common with other Anglican clergy', 'to give a feeling of togetherness throughout the Church', 'corporate prayer with fellow Christians world wide.'*

Scripturally of course this perception is rooted in the New Testament vision of the community of the Church:

‘So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup>to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup>until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. <sup>14</sup>Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. <sup>15</sup>Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. <sup>16</sup>From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work’ (Ephesians 4.11-16).

Dix suggests there was a later shift in perception of the matter by the Church herself in the fourth century when the Christian faith was adopted by the Roman emperor and the worship of the Church

‘from being the jealously secluded action of an exclusive association, it was little by little transformed – as large and influential sections of society received baptism in increasing numbers – into a public activity of the population at large.’ (1945, p305).

That which was already corporate now becomes fully public (ibid, p316); and hand in hand with this was a shift in attitude towards time, from worship generally having looked towards eternity now it was seen as playing a part in the time of the present, marking and consecrating it. Dix also suggests that the Office said in public in the churches of the empire was ‘not only a considerable extension of the field of corporate worship. It was, by contrast with the Eucharist ... open to all comers.’ (ibid, p331). Commonality could at times have darker connotations, at the time of the Roman Empire for the catholic West and again at the Reformation for the Church of England common worship could be about asserting identity and exercising control; as Vasey commented, ‘unity is a way in which the strong police the weak’ (quoted in Earey, 2013, p80). But even when unity of observance and practice fragment an underlying sense of common action seems to persist. Even when the private recitation of the Office became an increasing reality it did not at first ordinarily mean a solo recitation, it simply meant non-choral (Storey, 1976, p67). But the movement followed that did equate the two, Peter Damien attesting to the extension of the public Office to this sort of private usage (cited in Salmon, 1959, p35), at the time in the eleventh century when Brevaries began to be published in increasing numbers. Although even when the saying of the Office was both solo and private Jeremy Taylor could reflect on some of the advantages of both (1990b, p460) it was still regarded generally as a regrettable development. The integral awareness of the corporate, public and open nature of what we are about in the praying of the Office would seem still to be a significant ingredient both in what is offered, why it is offered and in continuing to hold the individual to the pattern of offering. And where the Office is



said of necessity or choice in private or alone it clearly continues to derive a more than theoretical source and inspiration from the public prayer of the whole Church. A useful parallel here would perhaps be the weekday celebration of the Eucharist, generally simplified and more intimate, compared to the Sunday celebration of the whole community, its original and primary manifestation. The celebration of a communion service with perhaps only one other person present or in a private setting still maintains its communal and corporate nature. A curate friend of mine used to say the Office alone but out loud in the parish church to which she was attached, a popular tourist destination, bearing witness to the public and proclamatory nature of what she was about. So another aspect of the public is the degree of visibility there may be for others to encounter what one is about in praying the Office. Similarly in Chapter 50 of the Rule of St Benedict those brothers too far from the monastery at the hours of prayer are directed to 'perform the work of God where they are, and kneel in reverence for God', for the saying of the Office is not to be hidden or apologetic but public and visible (de Waal, 1995, p149). While we have seen the saying of the Office by the clergy has tended in recent centuries to focus on promoting the spirituality of the few rather than the many, the genius of the Breviary and other portable prayer books being largely clerical or religious (Guiver, 1988, p145), its public and corporate dimension remains, surprisingly perhaps, strong and vital.

Cranmer worked for the participation of the people in the prayer of the Church and many have been the attempts since, within Anglicanism and with Rome in her revisions of the Breviary. Some may well yet say that wider, lay 'participation remains elusive and difficult to achieve' (Fletcher, 2002, p16). Others may point to the many attempts taking place around the country, some successful, some not. The prayer of the Office may sometimes take place in private and often be

recited alone but it is always a public act in the sense of remaining corporate and communal. Whether the appreciation of that public dimension as reported by the clerical respondents here has a future in promoting any wider or more public saying of the Office, more adapted to greater lay participation, remains to be seen. One strategy reported to me by the dean of Southwark (Nunn, 2013), using one of the new technologies, was the daily tweeting of a verse from the Office from his stall in the cathedral to enable and extend the participation of others.

## **5.2 The evangelical perspective**

An interview took place in July 2013 with one of the respondents to the questionnaire further to elucidate particular evangelical perspectives on the matter of the daily Office. This lasted about an hour with some pre-decided questions or topics introduced at various points but was generally an informal and discursive conversation, as reported below, and notes were taken. It should be noted that of the 30% (89) of respondents who answered the question about churchmanship some 7.5% (22) of these used the word evangelical as part of their self-description. Given the breadth within the evangelical tradition itself no one person could ever be said to speak for the whole nor be fully representative in their views, a point made by the interviewee himself. However Canon Parrott was selected for a variety of reasons – he is not identified with any of the extreme aspects of the evangelical movement; he is of an age where his experience of ministry within the evangelical tradition is both long standing and has provided the opportunity for extended reflection; he has exercised in the past a significant ministry within the realm of clergy training and formation as a diocesan Continuing Ministerial Education Officer which I judged to give him both a broader perspective on other clergy in ministry as well as the vocabulary to articulate

issues around prayer and theology that would be of more than personal relevance; and his willingness and accessibility for meeting were also a factor.

At the time of the Reformation the reformers, and those of the Anglican Church who stood most clearly within their influence, though promoting notions of personal holiness were suspicious of the daily Office as it represented a notion of clerical work that seemed to stand against the core principle of justification by faith alone, though their natural mistrust of the institutional Church and its requirements was probably also a contributory factor. Parrott responded (2013) to the initial question around this by suggesting that whilst it may explain something of why conservative evangelicals had inherited a position of suspicion with regard to the daily Office there were no direct echoes of it for evangelicals generally today. In his view three recent trends had contributed to a greater contemporary evangelical openness to the prayer of the Office, even if there was still difficulty around some of the language associated with it (and for example I noticed increasingly I talked of the daily Office rather than the divine Office in the conversation here). The first trend was the change of availability and flexibility – from the restrictive and limited Office of *The Book of Common Prayer* to an Office today that was accessible and more satisfying. The second trend was that most evangelicals were out of ‘battle mode’, as he described it, feeling less beleaguered and defensive and so generally more open and confident, and more open to using the mainstream forms of prayer offered by the Church. Thirdly the rise of theological training courses had meant that many Christians from different traditions and ecclesiastical backgrounds were now mixing much more and both customs around and attitudes about prayer, amongst other aspects of Church life, were being shared and communicated.

With regard to the contents and purpose of the Office Parrott reported being bemused by the juxtaposition in the questionnaire between psalmody, canticles and scripture as for him all was scripture and the key content of the Office was the Bible, the Office being '*my Bible reading*'. This led to a discussion about the length and choice of scripture offered in the present lectionary. Parrott felt that reading the scriptures in course and at length entirely appropriate, naturally expecting the praying of the Office to take around half an hour. Then followed a discussion about the presence of others, arising from the observed difficulty presented possibly to a passing stranger by a lengthy and difficult passage from the Bible. He acknowledged the tendency, which I recognised too, of regarding the praying of the Office as '*my*' prayer and so when joined by another they could all too easily be seen as joining in with '*my*' prayer - interrupting it even, delaying it, needing explanation and so on - whereas of course it had to be acknowledged that the Office is the prayer of the Church and so '*our*' prayer. Parrott talked of the conflation within his experience of the Office of the material provided, which could at times be difficult but which did provide a good discipline, and more personal and particular prayer, which could be informal intercessions or '*nattering with God*'. He found the range of daily changing collects helpful and stimulating, and some of the seasonal material overly contrived at times and less helpful.

From this flowed a discussion about the Office and its place within daily life and ministry. While it was recognised that for some the time of prayer could be just one event in a day full of other and different events, Parrott felt the daily Office actually undergirded the whole of life, being a way of managing oneself as a minister of the Gospel, feeding a sense of closeness to God that continued outside of the prayer time and of giving meaning and focus to all ordinary everyday events as well as a point of reference to the more casual occasions for

prayer that arose naturally in regular pastoral work. So '*it feeds my awareness of the prayerfulness of the rest of life*'; it is a '*prayer alert*'.

The fact of the daily Office not being prayed on days off or holidays came as no surprise to Parrott, its ministerial focus and public recitation being sufficient reason for that as well as the fact that its effects, benefits and implications continued regardless.

For myself, as one who asked the questions and participated in the discussion, I came away reflecting that this was not a new or surprising take on the daily Office but it was a fresh perspective, differently articulated, that raised the profile of aspects of the Office which I already was conscious of and could easily assent to but which had not been so foregrounded in my thinking before. What was different was the strong and unwavering focus on the Biblical element of the Office. What wasn't different, but which was helpfully and freshly re-stated, was the wider link to prayer, life and ministry. What followed also was a need to triangulate – to see how much of this was personal and how much was truly representative of this tradition. Two strategies were adopted: further research and further conversation. Lindbeck suggests (1996, p289) a juxtaposition historically between the catholic and protestant Churches, whereby in the former lay spirituality and prayer tended to flow from the monastic and clerical whilst in the latter the prayer of the minister tended to flow from the prayer patterns of the laity. For daily prayer and the Office within the Anglican church this would have the result of a twofold approach. For those from the catholic wing of the Church the introduction of the daily Office, perhaps through the Breviary or perhaps through *Common Worship*, would be the introduction of a rhythm of daily prayer and scripture readings, as was my own experience. For those from the protestant or evangelical wing the daily Office would not so much be an

introduction as a formalisation of an existing pattern of prayer, perhaps rounding or extending that pattern where it has been solely focused on the readings of scripture. I subsequently spoke with the chairman of the Church Society, the main conservative evangelical Anglican campaigning organisation and charity, on matters of daily prayer. This was not a formal interview as such but an informal conversation arranged with the explicit purpose of discussing aspects of the evangelical understanding and experience of prayer, which lasted about half an hour and notes were made afterward. Viscount Brentford (2013) reckoned that the task of daily prayer was to turn scripture into prayer, so '*knitting the two together*', and mentioned the other ingredients of '*waiting on the Lord*' and intercession, usually by praying through provided lists. I then turned to some of the books he suggested as having shaped the evangelical understanding and practice of prayer over the last century. Torrey (1900, p91f) roots the timing of daily prayer with scriptural references and commends prayer regularly in the early morning (after Mark 1.35), and upon occasion all night as well as before times of crisis or temptation, during times of busyness and after times of achievement. More recently Foster, another best selling evangelical author, has written of the goal of unceasing prayer (1992, p125f) in more than an echo of the early monastic ideal. Again his suggestions are rooted with scriptural references, but his much wider points of reference, drawing on Catholic and Quaker insights amongst others, reflect the broader and more open attitudes of contemporary evangelical experience that Parrott adverts to above. Foster speaks of the goal of this kind of prayer being an unbroken communion with God – requiring passionate commitment and resulting in 'peace, stillness, serenity, firmness of life-orientation.' (1992, p128) Finally Warren, another influential evangelical author, speaks of the three stages of prayer as seeing the wonder of God,

knowing God and being changed into his likeness, and going out in prayer and action (1994, p127). These reflect the ingredients of praise, scripture and intercession that have already been identified as key ingredients of the daily Office and underline the importance of vocabulary, a point which will be returned to.

When in the nineteenth century the Tractarians insisted upon the Office as a clerical commitment they did so following their evangelical predecessors (Guiver, 1988, p122). Lay evangelical prayer, deeply rooted in Scripture and life, therefore sourced the clerical experience of formal daily Prayer, even if that formal prayer did not always follow the forms and emphasis of *The Book of Common Prayer* and its successors. But it did enable a rich and vigorous understanding and experience of the Office to flourish within the family of prayer of the Church and resource anew their own life and ministry.

### **5.3 Formation and training**

In the field of education generally there is perhaps an underlying dualism of understanding and interpretation with regard to teaching, formation and training that should first be identified, as it appears significantly to impact upon the preparation for ministry within the Church. The two parts of this have been described as the distinction between formative education and critical education (Astley, 1994, p78) but for the moment I would like to look behind those to the older terms of *paideia* and *pedagogy*.

For there was always the ancient Greek notion of culture whereby education was seen as the culturing of the human being in virtue. Pedagogy, with its courses of study focused on the mind, was always balanced by this *paideia* (Wright, 2000, p152) which was focused on promoting, forming and disciplining the

understanding. In line with this St Ignatius comments early in his *Spiritual Exercises* that 'it is not much knowledge that fills and satisfies the soul, but the intimate understanding and relish of the truth' (Loyola, 1951, p2). *Paideia* was a tradition that flourished within monasticism; not only did the Benedictine movement in particular enormously influence the whole structure of western education but it was the 'vast leisure of the cloister' (Cassiodorus quoted in Vann, 1953, p44) itself that educated Europe. This was perhaps particularly true in this country since the particular shaping of English spirituality by the presence of Benedictine Abbots and monks in her cathedrals for nearly one thousand years has often been noted (Guiver, 1988, p115). Similarly it has been argued (Vann, 1953, p44) that culture generally becomes impossible without the contemplative aspect, and that only with this contemplative aspect can education once again include the necessary scale of values and address the whole person.

'Education, in other words, has as one of its primary objects to teach us how to stop and be still and look, how to concentrate our gaze till things begin to reveal their mystery to us. It must teach us to preserve and heighten our sense of wonder, which is the womb of poetry and philosophy alike; for otherwise, no matter what our book-learning, beauty and life will pass us by' (Vann, 1953, p48).

Over the centuries however the main stress and focus of education has tended to move away from the learning of the individual towards the material being taught. So where the broader tradition of *paideia* survives today it is now more usually in fragmented and subservient ways.

There is of course a societal discourse lying behind or parallel to all this. The belief in possible objectivity arising from the realm of facts, so giving us knowledge, was increasingly juxtaposed with the belief in alleged subjectivity located around private and optional beliefs. MacIntyre comments, 'facts, like telescopes and wigs for gentlemen, were a seventeenth century invention' (1988, p357). The division of facts from values has caused harm for both and has



contributed to the increasing separation of the cognitive from the affective, of mind from character, for there has been a simplistic tendency to isolate feelings on the one hand and reason on the other. In the discipline of moral philosophy it is Midgley who most clearly argues against too clear a split between the cognitive and affective, especially rejecting the endemic view of the personification of reason as the opponent and governor of feeling and that 'chaotic alien tribe of Passions or Instincts' (1978, p260). According to Solomon reason may have an objective aspect but this is only a part of the whole, the whole remaining subjective and personal. Reason is not a different non-passionate faculty but rather 'the articulate expression and expansion of the passions themselves. Reason is nothing other than perspicacious passion' (1993, p59). Intellectual reasoning therefore may only be a derivative and secondary process.

Within the institution of the Church this split has been maintained by the twentieth century distinction made between catechesis, a nurturing in the faith, and religious education, a teaching about the faith. But Bourgeault speaks of the necessity 'of putting the mind in the heart' for all spiritual theology to take place (2004, p164) and this bridging of the divide is also witnessed to by feminist theologians such as Isherwood who has spoken of theology itself as an act of love (2009); and, like Pickstock's 'ungating' mentioned above (p61), Grey writes of Theology as a journey,

'through de-constructing the narratives of 'un-making', of fragmentation, towards the narratives of healing and transformation. It evokes the images and activities of 'claiming space', of dis-location and re-location which are essential if the aims of integrity and whole-making are to be achieved from the broken places from which we start' (Grey, 1996, p85).

This recalls the older notion of learning as a process of dying, being stripped, and going dark (Vann, 1953, p60). Theology here becomes a kind of homecoming (Vann, 1953, p91) and a homecoming that can redeem and shape not only the

Christian pilgrim, but the disciplines of theology and religious education too. It is increasingly recognised that formation must always have its emancipatory aspect (Nipkov, 1996, p54) and that transformation will, indeed must, play a part in training. For some the objective study of theology will remain essential in training for the ordained ministry, for others the key task will be helping ordinands develop rather a theological understanding.

Christian knowledge traditionally is relational knowledge, arising from the relationship with God. The Hebrew word for knowledge, *yada*, encompasses many kinds of knowing, including the sexual encounter between two people. But the Church also has been deeply influenced by the understanding of truth as something absolute that arose with Modernity (Wright, 2009). Any discussion of formation and training will be influenced by and need to take account of the intertwining of the two understandings in today's Christian faith community. Astley speaks of Christian education in its widest sense needing to include 'both the formation of a Christian worldview and lifestyle, and also some self-critical reasoning about Christianity from within that position' (1992, p317). Ideally therefore any educative experience, that truly aims to engage the whole person in a creative and formative process, must involve will, reason and passions together;

'Too much Christian religious education, particularly of adults, devotes itself entirely to cognitive, rational reflection on Christian values...Christian religious education must primarily be an induction into religious feeling' (Astley, 1994, p241).

Where some will fall back on claims of objective certain truth others will be underlining the importance of openness. Palmer has argued that to teach is to create a space in which obedience to truth is practised. That space necessarily has dimensions of openness, containedness and hospitality with physical, conceptual and dramatic or enacted aspects. For Palmer this obedience is 'to

listen with a discerning ear and respond faithfully to the personal implications of what one has heard' (Palmer, 1993, p89). Any stance of openness may be open to objections of relativity but as Fowler, following Niebuhr, has pointed out, 'relativity need not lead to relativism' as long as it remains 'in some sense relative to the ground of being and meaning' (quoted in Astley, 1994, p258).

Contemporary colleges and courses will inevitably have different stresses and emphases and the institutional culture of monitoring and evaluation will always have the tendency to promote an emphasis on learning outcomes. The formation element of the Christian story though will always want to remind that this is not knowledge about something but rather a relational experience that will change and help transform the individual in the light of a faith experience, within a particular discipline.

It should also be noted that the word formation comes to us from the Roman Catholic tradition and the term remains misunderstood by many in the Anglican church today, not least perhaps because it is deeply challenging to the current dominant culture of training for ministry. Its role in the language of Catholicism largely arose when preparation for ministry involved the institutionalisation and training of pre-dominantly late adolescent candidates. Knowledge played its part of course but the forming of the affective life was central, and this was facilitated by the largely homogeneous, as well as youthful, constituency from which that Church drew her candidates at that time. Training for ministry within Anglicanism now draws on an older and heterogeneous constituency and is often non-residential, the figures for 2012/13 being (Evans, 2013) 581 ordinands on residential training at theological colleges as opposed to 651 training on non-residential and part-time courses. This can have advantages in terms of enabling the meeting and growth together of different groupings in the Church, as has

been noted above, but these therefore are people who have already been formed by life and the knowledge that can be imparted is inevitably more cerebral and less affective. As Lindbeck comments,

‘the spiritual formation which most contemporary students desire is not the internalisation of a comprehensive and coherent religious outlook and correlated practices such as a communal tradition provides. They think rather in terms of discovering or eclectically constructing their own individual vision and corresponding form of life’ (1996, p290).

The term formation has itself evolved and is still evolving in these new circumstances. The concept can still have relevance and use, however, in terms of the tradition of paideia companioning pedagogy. So formation can still mean a becoming over time – indeed perhaps a life time – a becoming that is a result of the ongoing discovery of Christ in the individual and of the individual in Christ. Only the work of the Spirit makes this possible and the job of any discipline of daily Prayer is to facilitate that specific work of the Spirit: to make us ever more open, and ever more vulnerable to the adventure of God. And whatever may or may not happen during theological training for ministry the on-going prayer of the daily Office can complement and build on whatever has gone before and provide its own dynamic of Christian formation and maturity. The elements of this process of faith formation would seem to me to include an opening, a widening, a deepening and an integrating. What this will look like will be different for all of us, for our personal story, our temperament, our circumstances and our ministry will all play their part in what is possible and what is appropriate. But these are the very areas in which the further opening of our hearts, the widening of our understanding, the deepening of our sensitivity and the integrating of our being after the image of Christ will take place.

Lindbeck comments on training that ‘the practical, pastoral or clinical side of the curriculum tends to be equally remote from personal appropriation and

internalisation' (1996, p295). The daily Office provides just such opportunities for personal appropriation and internalisation, after the image and likeness of Christ, but any explanation of the Office and of its place and role for those in ministry will need to be carefully tailored with regard to the perceptions and assumptions of those in training today.

#### **5.4 Defining an Office**

The institutional requirements of praying the daily Office have at their heart the need of the Church to secure the on-going commitment of her members, ensuring that the clergy particularly are constantly immersed in the narratives of faith. As has been seen in the history of the daily Office the laity who formed such a significant element in the Office's early evolution were gradually marginalised over time, as indeed they were from the power structures of the Church. Though daily personal prayer flourished in the meantime for the laity, particularly perhaps in the protestant world, it was only in the twentieth century the institution of the Church began significantly to raise and attempt to address the issue of extending the Office again for lay and communal celebration. In addition to this, as we have seen, has been the contemporary attempt to balance the recitation of Scripture with the ancient ingredients of praise and intercession. Though both these attempts have not always, or at least not yet, been fully successful they are in progress. What remains largely unaddressed is the recapturing of the ancient liturgical differentiations between the nature and focus of the prayer of the evening and of the morning, but we will be returning to these and related matters in the next chapter when suggestions will be made for the evolving Office for the future.

As to defining the Office, one respondent said they thought for prayer to count as an Office it '*had to contain the recitation of a Gospel Canticle*'. What however is

here proposed is something akin to Wittgenstein's suggestion of family resemblance. Rather than one common feature what unifies here is

‘an overlapping series of similarities and resemblances. It is this very crisscrossing which gives concepts their stability. In this they resemble a thread, ‘where the strength of the thread does not reside in the fact that some fibres run through its whole length, but in the overlapping of many fibres’ (Edmonds, 2001, p229).

These threads or fibres coalesce around rationale, content and time, and each are accompanied by comments from the questionnaire, as are also the succeeding three elements that are judged to comprise any Office. These quotations act as illustrations and allow a further hearing of the respondents' words.

**Rationale:** *‘I see this as part of a personal discipline within the purpose of establishing a prayerful pattern of life’, ‘daily committing one's life to the hands of God and co-operating with him in the running of the affairs of the particular day’, ‘keeping in the stream’, ‘a discipline and rhythm for prayer and Bible reading’, ‘providing point of stability, focus, rhythm’, ‘sanctification of time’, ‘framework, scaffolding’, ‘It also enables me to ‘live the story’ i.e. throughout the year to be indwelling the Christian narrative’, ‘an ancient and sacred prayer of the Church’.*

So with regard to rationale or purpose one or other or some combination of one or other of the following is likely, be they summarised as the consecration of time, the offering of the Church, a corporate ritual of the word and of the day, the discipline required of one in ministry, and personal formation and devotion.

**Content:** *‘focused relationship with God through praise, confession, listening, Bible Study and Bible reflection’, ‘Service of God. Prayer for my community. Spiritual Direction’, ‘prayer, listening/hearing scripture read and reflecting on it’, ‘time with God - reading Scripture - bringing needs of sick and people for whom I have on my heart for prayer’.*

So with regard to that which comprises the Prayer itself one or other or some combination of praise, Scripture and intercession will be present. The same is true of the various possible ingredients of meditation, contrition, supplication, contemplation, petition and so on.

**Timing:** *'Good to start the day with a deliberate act of prayer and devotion irrespective of whether you feel like it', 'daily committing one's life to the hands of God and co-operating with him in the running of the affairs of the particular day', 'a response to the biblical call to "pray without ceasing"', 'to dedicate the day to God, to give thanks for the day', 'grounding every day in and with God - the Divine Office begins and ends each working day so that everything we do is offered to God'.*

So, with regard to the time and occasion for the Prayer, for some the Office is twice or once daily throughout the week, regardless of time at work or time off. For others the prayer is more or less regular, or more or less frequent. For others still it occurs only when at work, and more informal prayer may or may not spontaneously arise at other points. What does emerge from the responses to the Questionnaire is that there is in common a sense of rhythm and discipline; in other words there is, however inarticulate, reason for and commitment to when, where, how and what Office is prayed.

The three elements that seem to the foreground of any definition of the Office are those of praise, scripture and intercession, or to include a more evangelical vocabulary, as proposed by Warren above (Chapter 5.2), we could suggest wonder and praise, Scripture and the transforming knowledge of God, engagement with the world and intercession. These defining elements are now to be re-presented, as the approach to and understanding of them will shape any

decision regarding the contents of the prayer of the Office and upon them will rest the following discussion as to future possibilities. In doing this I have sought an approach that has the potential to straddle some of the theological and ecclesial divides that beset the Anglican tradition, be that liberal and conservative, evangelical and catholic or any of those labels adverted to in chapter 4 above. This approach of wisdom as set forth by Ford (2007) would seem more than adequately to respect and to encompass this spectrum, though while in using Ford I do so not in the expectation that his approach will satisfy all readers of this thesis nor all pray-ers of the Office, but that it has the potential usefully to suggest a fresh perspective, or ask fresh questions, of all who consider these three key defining elements.

#### **5.4.1 Wonder and Praise**

*'It enables us to join the eternal worship of heaven as we offer our praise in a form shared with the wider church', 'participating in the universal round of praise', 'to reassert dependence on God', 'as a grounding of our lives in God and His worship. Taking time each day to bring ourselves to the realisation of who God is, and God's relationship to us and to our lives'.*

Ford suggests that worship is key to Christian involvement with all aspects of life (2007, p193) but that the God who is worshipped, and Christianity's particular understanding of and insight into the nature of God, is key to the worship and praise that is offered. Worship and praise is here a performance of scripture and tradition together that helps shape the life of the individual and the community of the church in relation to God, one another and the world at large.

'Christian worship at its best has something of the fruitful combination in the Spirit of...deep engagement with scripture and tradition; the centrality of the Father's relationship to Jesus in the Spirit; crying out to God; loving God for God's sake; remembering the events of Jesus' life and identifying with him in his death and resurrection; commitment and compassion in



community; and orientation to God's future, which includes the future of all people and all creation.' (2007, p208).

Scripture reading and intercession are therefore integral to praise, and so is an informed theological appreciation of the great doctrines of Trinity and Incarnation, creation and redemption and, above all, of love. For Ford, our faith is optative, rooted and expressed in desire which is itself evoked by God's call and desire for us and God's world.

Faith 'searches the heights and depths of our fragile existence, always learning and discerning, and never past being surprised. It is a faith whose source, hope and delight is the God of blessing who loves in wisdom.' (2007, p391)

Worship and praise arise from and in turn feed this faith, and enable us to share in something of the wisdom and blessing of our God. It is an expression of the relationship of desire and love that lies between God and God's creation, expressed by a humanity that is immersed in the challenges and risks of daily living and which thereby is 'being affirmed and affirming, being instructed and instructing, being questioned and questioning, being surprised and exploring new possibilities'. (Ford, 2007, p381)

#### **5.4.2 Scripture and the transforming knowledge of God**

*'Discipline to pray and reflect daily on scripture', 'the ordered reading of scripture keeps us mindful of God's dealings with us', 'ensures I continue to listen daily to the Scriptures', 'soaked in God's Word'.*

The purpose in reading the Bible may seem too obvious to be worth re-stating but where familiarity can breed contempt or indifference and where a significant number of respondents to the Questionnaire found the passages from scripture over long a re-stating may be of use. Ford expresses it in the following terms,

'there is a primary theology that can be distilled from reading and rereading the Bible. This is not simply about information, or even knowledge, but about the sort of wisdom that is gained from reading

scripture alert both to its origins, reception and current interpretations and also to contemporary understanding and life....this is not simply about asking what an ancient book said many hundreds of years ago to its original audience...but the text has nourished readers over the centuries and around the world today through its testimony to God and God's way with the world. It has continued to be extraordinarily generative for imagining, understanding, believing, hoping and living.....the very abundance of meanings, which are often in tension or even in conflict with one another, calls for continual rereading and discernment' (2007, p3).

This reading and rereading he sets within the life of the church, for the sake of God, and as kind of apprenticeship to the saints, so reading 'in the Spirit, immersed in life, desiring God's future, and open to continually fresh re-readings in new situations' (2007, p203). This mention of desire grounds, crucially, an activity that might otherwise be seen as purely or mainly a cerebral one as one that engages deeply with the whole person. Indeed, Scripture need not necessarily be read for meaning:

'frequently, we don't let the Scriptures do what they were written to do – namely, to give the Mystery we call God a chance to be heard and met. The Bible is not a theological textbook designed only to feed our minds and provide intellectual insight. Most of the Bible is imaginative literature meant to draw us into its world so that God can touch us.' (Barry, 2008, p166).

By reading we are brought into encounter. Those who react to biblical readings with boredom or impatience are missing the potential for this deeper engagement or encounter, which Ford later expresses as the need to 'reread in love' (2007, p207). This engagement in love with the scriptural texts makes much more sense of the intercessory prayers that may follow, as they both become merely a different expression of the same movement of the heart and soul within the context of wonder and praise rather than two distinct and apparently unrelated activities.

### 5.4.3 Engagement with the world and Intercession

*'The continued prayers for the parish offered daily', 'to pray for the parish, the wider church in the world', 'to get me thinking and praying beyond myself', 'offering to God on behalf of parish'.*

Ford speaks of the cries that arise within the wisdom tradition and it is the cry that lies at the heart of intercessory prayer. As with scripture reading, prayer for others can reduce to rote and be seen as a chore but where once again the heart can be engaged and desire and discernment released then intercession can again take its place as a key part of the Christian calling and a key part of the individual and community's engagement with God, the world and life.

'The more I have searched Christian wisdom the more I have been struck by its core connection with cries: the cries for wisdom and the cries by personified biblical wisdom; cries within and outside scripture that arise from the intensity of life – in joy, suffering, recognition, wonder, bewilderment, gratitude, expectation or acclamation; and cries of people for what they most desire – love, justice, truth, goodness, compassion, children, health, food and drink, education, security, and so on.' (Ford, 2007, p5)

Those interceding are called to express their own desires in this matter honestly but also to be aware they are called to tap into and express the desires of the Church, of the whole community, and to be true to the desire and love of God. For Weil it is 'attention to others' (quoted in Chase, 2005, p370) while for Guenther it is 'a small experience of watching at the foot of the cross' (1998, p57). For Law it is part of the 'ancient friendship of Christians, uniting and cementing their hearts' (1978, p301). Thurian heads his discussion of the Office of the priest with the title, 'The Office of Intercession' since,

'the pastor is in the community a sign of Christ the high priest and intercessor....his prayer does not replace those of the faithful; he is not the man who prays for those who do not pray; every Christian has a special duty in this ministry of prayer, which cannot be avoided or handed over to the ministers. But the pastor has a particular prayer ministry according to his responsibility in the community, which is that of an ambassador of Christ and a sign of the Son's intercession with the Father' (1983, p117f).

The present provision for Daily Prayer also emphasises that intercession arises 'out of the offering of praise to God and an encounter with him in Scripture' (Bradshaw, 2006a, p26). It can also draw our attention away from ourselves where there are dangers of self-absorption or self-pity. The task of prayer, especially the prayer for others, is not a light one but it is integral to both praise and the rereading of scripture and how they bear fruit in the vital expression of love in and for the whole of God's creation and the particular present needs of the world.

#### **5.4.4 Duty and Joy**

Discipline is part of what defines an Office not just because of its place in Canon Law but because from the earliest centuries, as we have seen, (Chapter 3 above and Bradshaw, 2009, p104f) the daily offering of prayer was an integral part of what defined the Church and was how its individual members enabled the regular sacrifice of praise to God, which fulfilled the perpetual daily sacrifices of the Old Testament. It should be remembered too that for the earliest Christians seeking admittance to the faith the Church demanded a high level of commitment more akin to entering a religious order today, not just because the Church began life as a persecuted sect but also because membership into the body of the risen Christ was regarded as a much more serious matter than it is today. The daily discipline of prayer was therefore a matter of communal and personal identity, achieved in offering and sacrifice, as well an invited response to the call from God.

However while discipline in prayer is not presently a fashionable topic in circles of liturgy or spirituality it deserves reclaiming. Not least because of the proven benefits of an exercise of the will and of habit. Underhill commends 'the faithful

repetition of appropriate acts that can deepen our understanding of the realities they are intended to convey' (1984, p26f) and even 'the monotony of these repetitions' can enable the soul to open out 'with increasing serenity on unlimited perspectives, felt rather than analysed, which converge on God.'

There will always be the tendency, particularly perhaps in a post-modern culture with its resistances to authority and strictures, for notions of discipline in prayer to be at the least questioned or to be rejected or experienced as unhelpful. The more recent history of how the obligation of the Office was communicated will also still have its effects. Storey speaks of Canon lawyers and moral theologians who 'terrorize' the clergy into saying, though not praying, the daily Office (1976, p53). As well, for those people carrying a more judgemental image of God or with a harsh, moralistic superego the saying of the Office out of obligation alone could work to internalise oppression and limit growth (Parsons, 2006, p119). Some too can pray the Office and fulfil the letter of obligation but never in such a way as to open themselves to its deep transformatory possibilities. But set free from misconceptions or an overly narrow or legalistic perception the element of freedom and so of joy could appropriately balance the equally necessary sense of duty and obligation. So against any imbalance here we need to set the reasons for the discipline. Jeremy Taylor makes the point that God will assist the clergy in their 'pious and careful endeavours' in this matter since those graces

'of sanctification, of a more excellent faith, of fervent charity, of providence and paternal care' which once descended upon the apostles by way of miracle now 'are to be acquired by human industry, by study and good letters' (Taylor, 1990a, p230).

This does not mean to say the Office will always appear to be meaningful or fruitful. Perri comments that,

‘empty prayers, the empty discipline, and the empty life can be symbolically meaningful as signs of the messianic, prophetic, and sacrificial roles’ that comprise the vocation to ministry in the Church (1996, p36).

Hughes points out that the root meaning of obedience is *obaudire*, to listen (1977, p45) so a training in prayer is a vital part of training in obedience and a training in obedience a vital part of training in prayer, regardless of any felt benefits in the present. This will inevitably involve an act of will, choice and commitment over time involving both effort and industry, rather like the investment we make in the relationships, such as friendships, and in the activities that are really important to us. Of course graced affective moments will come, when the prayer seems rich and fruitful, but these are side benefits not the main purpose. Myriad benefits will be revealed over time but may not be apparent in the short term, which is why an interplay of duty with joy is required. Hargrave describes any received affective moments as ‘a flash of blue and gold’ that is ‘the rare exception rather than the rule’, but the point is to put ourselves ‘quite deliberately, in that place where we are regularly available to listen to what God might have to say to us.’ (2011, p20). It is in that listening and obedience that greater freedom and insight are slowly formed.

#### **5.4.5 Conclusion**

The daily Prayer of the Church is a particular coming together of the text of the Office; the individual or group of individuals who read or pray that text; the context in which the prayer is made, public or private; the ministerial context of the individual(s) and the life of the wider Church; and, of course, the God to whom the prayer is directed and in whose presence the prayer is made and through whose Holy Spirit the text is vivified and bears fruit. As *Common Worship* comments, ‘worship is more than what is said; it is also what is done and

how it is done.’ (2000, px). The Office is a term used by many but perhaps precisely defined by few. Its many and various manifestations hold a family resemblance based on an overlapping of rationale, content and time and finding itself located around the common thread of wonder and praise, Scripture and the knowledge of God, and intercession and engagement with the wider world. Throughout its changing story and fortunes it has been central to the witness of the Church and the sustaining of the clerical life. To the possibilities of the future we now turn.

## **Chapter 6 An Office for the future?**

*The purpose of this chapter is to propose a practical suggestion for the use of the clergy which arises from the understanding what it is they actually do and believe around their daily Prayer, the fruit of the research questionnaire above. This paper suggest a new approach to the daily Office that aims to enable the clergy to adopt a form of the Office that is more appropriate for them in their present life and ministry; a proposal that has the possibility of contributing to the next step of the Office's current manifestation and unfolding history within the life of the Church.*

### **6.1 An Office for the future?**

The document proposed for the future use of the clergy follows and is here set out in different font and layout from the thesis for the sake of clarity.

#### **Explaining 'An Office for the future?'**

*The purpose of this paper is to give some background in terms of the story of the Office over the Christian centuries. Then to invite reflection on some general questions about prayer and the relationship with God before setting out the three key ingredients of any Office (Praise and wonder, Scripture and the transforming knowledge of God, Intercession and engagement with the world) to suggest a framework for further reflection and possible choice. This may (or may not!) prove helpful for those who want to develop their usage of the daily prayer of the Church in a way more appropriate to their present experience and circumstances.*

The daily Office has been an ingredient of the clerical life from the earliest Christian centuries. It is regarded as playing a key part in maintaining the prayer of the Church in the ceaseless praise of God as well as enabling an ever better acquaintance with the Scriptures and fostering on-going professional and personal formation and being the means of the daily consecration of time. It is enshrined in Canon Law as a requirement, indeed the requirement, of the clerical state and the ideal stance is surely one that



balances duty and joy, as the phrase in Eucharistic Prayer C has it. The element of duty helps maintain clerical integrity, ensuring we remain immersed in the narratives and perspectives of our shared faith – a transcendent resource in an otherwise largely empirical world. The element of joy balances the first and helps maintain the relevance and application of prayer to our daily living and activities, whether ministerial or otherwise. It ensures our vocation as something that remains alive and active in the present and it preserves our enthusiasm for the myriad ways of our God.

Archbishop Cranmer's vision of prayer that was 'common' in fact harked back to the earliest Christian centuries and a form of public daily prayer that was seen as the task of the whole gathered community and which seems to have been centred on the praise of God and offerings of prayer and intercessions, with special and different rituals to do with the light of evening and of morning. It seems more than likely that the practice of the early Church was influenced by and drew upon the patterns of Jewish piety as well as the practices of Hellenistic philosophy. Early monasticism, originally of course another lay movement, shifted the focus more towards the recitation of the psalms and the meditative reading of scripture. As monasticism became increasingly a clericalised movement and as religious houses took responsibility for the founding and running of the great cathedrals so this initial side-current, of focus on the psalms and the Scriptures, became central to the story of the Office. Over time, as the clerical profession became more formalised and the singing of the Office more common, so the part of the wider laity tended to become that of occasional attenders and observers. The form of the different Offices of the day also became increasingly homogeneous as the various ritual and liturgical aspects declined, as did the provision for silent meditation. So the Office became increasingly a clerical liturgy of the word focused on psalmody and scripture, with praise and intercession taking second place. This rich and complex history does at least offer us today a broad palette from which we can draw a variety of practices and different points of focus to suit differing circumstances and temperaments whilst maintaining our part in the shared common prayer of the Church.

### **(Re-)Designing your daily Office - questions for reflection**

- What is the present context of your ministry and work?
- What has been your pattern of daily or regular prayer up to now?

- What have been the things you have appreciated or found difficult about such a pattern (be that timing, form, content, location, presence or absence of others, etc)?
- What of these do you have control over or might you like to do something about?
- What other forms of prayer are already part of the week for you (be that the Eucharist, prayer with colleagues, bible study, Julian groups etc)?
- Are there other forms of prayer that you miss? Or might be included in the praying of the Office? (such as silence, a review of the day or an Examen)
- It may be your present practice suits you and your circumstances and will continue to be your choice. If so, how would it be to give thanks to God for this continuing and sustaining gift?
- Or what regularity, frequency, variety and rhythm of prayer is going to work for you in the foreseeable future? (Some may find it helpful here to chart a usual week by day and by time, usually morning, afternoon and evening, and so clarify both any existing forms of prayer and what form or type of the Office may be appropriate or possible).

### **Praise and wonder**

Traditionally this element of the Office has been focussed on the use of hymns and of canticles, especially the Venite, Benedictus, Magnificat and Benedicite, though particular psalms (148-150) or scriptural passages (Revelation 7.12) also of course play their part. In part praise and wonder speaks as much about intention as content when it comes to the daily Office. It reminds us of the primacy of God as the source, focus, intention and goal of our life, calling and world. It reminds us too of the particular nature of our God as revealed in Christ: God as creator, redeemer and sustainer, God as love, God transcendent and immanent, God ever desiring to be in relationship with us and his world.

- So why are we doing it?
- Why would we like to be doing it?
- Who is God for us at the moment?
- How would we like our relationship with God to be?

Rather like the custom of saying Grace at meals the praise of God roots the various purposes of the Office, be that articulated as the consecration of time and the day, participation in the prayer of the Church or knowledge of Scripture or on-going personal and 'professional' formation.

Finally this focus on praise and wonder will prevent the Office falling into various possible distortions, such as legalism (saying it mainly because we are supposed to), rote (to be got through as quickly as possible), indulgence (this is my prayer and I'll do only what and when I feel like it) and wooliness (not being sure why we are doing what we are doing but hoping for the best!).

### **Scripture and the transforming knowledge of God**

Questions that may be helpful here in concluding what may be best and most appropriate for your daily prayer are:

- What other exposure to Scripture do you have during the week? (Bible notes, Eucharist etc)
- What is your main desire when reading Scripture here – to be reading the same as others 'in communion'? To be reading in course and cover the whole Bible over a period of time (and, if so, of what duration)? To be inspired or challenged by a brief-ish inspirational text?
- What part might periods of silence play – before, during or after?
- Will your main engagement with the text be one of recitation (quietly or out loud) or of meditation or of imaginative contemplation or another kind of contemplation?
- How might you be open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit in the various possible responses to the scripture read – be that towards penitence, further commitment, colloquy or something else?

### **Intercession and engagement with the world**

The prayer here can be informal or formal or a mixture of the two, particularly depending on how much of the Office is to be said privately and publicly, alone or with others. Informal prayer may be entirely spontaneous or follow the traditional Eucharistic pattern of intercession for Church, world, the sick and the dead or guided by some principle of the global and the local or those suggested by the head and those

prompted by the heart. Formal prayer may comprise the given intercessions that are printed in Common Worship and also in the Breviary. They may follow a pre-decided set pattern, offered by an organisation like a diocese or church organisation such as the Church Society. Some have their own personally devised patterns; Bradshaw in writing in 'A Companion to Common Worship' (2006b, p13) suggests a simpler weekly cycle:

*Sunday:* creation; new creation; resurrection

*Monday:* economic life; business; agriculture

*Tuesday:* healing and wholeness

*Wednesday:* vocation; the needy and those who care for them

*Thursday:* unity; education; those in authority

*Friday:* the cross; penitence; reconciliation

*Saturday:* leisure, contemplation; saints; the dying and departed; the life of heaven

Or one might respect the ancient differentiation between the liturgies for evening and morning (the evening being the start of the new day in the ancient world) and have the focus of the intercessions of the evening as being around freedom from sin, being enlightened by Christ, those living in darkness etc and the focus for the intercessions of the morning being the new creation, the joy of the risen Christ, the gift of baptism and so on. Another example of this can be found in 'Praise and prayer in all our days – The sanctification of time' by Br. Tristram SSF in the Franciscan Daily Office.

### **A Calendar?**

Finally should be mentioned the various possibilities of enriching the cycle of daily prayer with an observation of the seasons of the Church's liturgical year and of the days of remembering the saints. Michael Perham comments in 'The Communion of Saints' (1980, p134) that Anglicanism has lost or indeed never incorporated the spontaneous local acclamation of those deemed to be worthy of naming and celebrating in any calendar, so the tendency is to rely on what is provided by central church authorities. This may be the Common Worship calendar of Holy Days, the Church Union's annual Ordo, the Roman lectionary or some other. In each case it seems likely the one who decides will perhaps be exercising at times discretion over what is observed or not, leaving out the more apparently irrelevant or inconvenient. This is a form of adaptation

and flexibility but the practice of exclusion over one of inclusion does not and will not of course address the overall imbalance within the calendars between clergy and laity and men and women, whereby the latter of the two groups are grossly under represented (Perham, 1980, p157).

## **Conclusion**

What might you be left with now? Embracing what you already do – maybe as before, maybe with an enhanced appreciation of its structure and purpose? Or planning to change and adapt your pattern of prayer or its contents in the light of this paper. Either way thank you for your commitment of time and attention in reading and reflecting.

## **6.2 Pilot**

Of the respondents to the questionnaire some 75 fell into the category that they had indicated that they were willing to have further contact with me about the research and who had also supplied an email address. This group were sent a draft of this document and were invited to comment. 18 (or 24%) replied with a range of responses: *'Your analysis and suggestions are most useful:- Thank you once more for making me think about what had become a mechanical task', 'I very much like the weekly prayer pattern you have offered, which gives a bit of structure and variety. I sometimes find myself praying for the same sort of things day after day! My particular frustration with the office is that it is so wordy, so I sometimes only use one reading and allow more space for silence. The other thing that struck me visiting Worth Abbey was their use of non-Biblical readings - sometimes from patristic sources, but also from popes, Martin Luther King etc. This, I thought, was wonderful', 'Will I be changing what I do? No, but there is scope for improvement always', 'Many thanks for this excellent summary, Andrew, full of helpful reminders and suggestions too', 'I really enjoyed reading this, thank you. It raises some great questions and reminded me how important is*

*the balance between the three elements you clearly delineate', 'I have failed many attempts to do an Evening Office and I think that your document has finally given me permission to stop trying!', 'silence as much as lists of intercessions is crucial'. 'My question is about who would use this material. I could see that it could form part of a 'formation for ministry' course for LLMs and Clergy at college; similarly clergy who were seeking to renew their prayer life would value it. I could imagine that were it in a shorter format it might be used as a discussion document by teams of clergy who worked and prayed together. At the moment the length and range of questions probably put it beyond use by the majority of clergy'. The comment about further abbreviation, whilst presenting something of a challenge, does underline the point made above about the existing published material. There was also significant positive comment on the possible patterns of intercession. One respondent wrote, 'Thank you – very interesting. I wonder whether Grove might be interested in publishing it? A worthwhile and important booklet...' The question of further dissemination will be addressed in the conclusion to this chapter but what came through from most of these responses was that people were more than glad to be invited to reflect on their practice of daily prayer, with a provided historical and theological context.*

### **6.3 Discussion**

The paper suggested here is effectively a development made possible by the far greater flexibility introduced with the various provisions in *Common Worship* and the relaxing of the relevant sections in Canon law, even if the permissions for flexibility are only to be found in the rubrics or in the notes accompanying the orders of service. With regard to the Alternative Services Book of 1980 Vasey commented that 'the room given...for unscripted prayer and local decision marks

a return to the norm for Christian Prayer' (quoted in Earey, 2013, p60). So although I have used the word development it can also be seen as a return to a more ancient approach. The proposal here is as well in line with the feedback received from the respondents to the questionnaire, many of whom asked for the possibility of fewer words and greater flexibility and some of whom asked for an Office that was simpler and more straightforward. Previous attempts to reclaim the Office for the clergy, such as 'The Office and Work of the Priest' (Martineau, 1981) or 'Toward a Renewed Priesthood' (Middleton, 1995) have relied on the restating of traditional practices such as the ringing of the bell before the Office with supporting and not unintelligent explanation and discourse, a strategy of encouragement that has not proved fully to have met the needs of clergy. The approach here proceeds by giving information and then inviting selection, through offering questions for reflection, with the aim of enabling an informed choice. A lack of variety and flexibility in prayer has been cited as part of a more general neglect by faith communities of everyday daily prayer (Brown, 2002) and Bradshaw comments that ancient patterns of the Office offer us

'a much more informal style of prayer, which is best done communally, but can also be performed individually if necessity dictates. It does not single out morning and evening as *the* occasions when one ought to pray, but simply emphasises the desirability of frequent prayer at whatever times that is possible.' (Bradshaw, 2009, p115).

Flexibility and freedom that is based on a secure underlying theology of the Office should also ensure the saying of the Office, with all its benefits, will survive and flourish in changing circumstances, be those changes interior or external, personal or ministerial.

One cleric I spoke to when preparing for this research project commented back that after mentioning to his bishop that he found the obligation of saying the daily Office tedious and unhelpful, the bishop had responded by releasing him from it

and they agreed together that a praying of a daily Examen would be a suitable replacement. Whilst the further circumstances of the individual's experience and practice here are unknown to me, and whilst I have found the Examen of great personal use over the years, actually I believe the Office has not only a wider significance and usefulness within the body of the Church but also is the greater resource of the two, not least because an Office can and usefully does contain an Examen but an Examen does not contain an Office nor its constituent elements. Greater knowledge here, combined with the awareness of greater flexibility and choice may have led to a richer and fuller engagement with a more useful form of the Office rather than just replacing it with a different, and more narrowly focused, discipline.

What seems first required for a process of informed choice is education or enlightenment into the nature of the daily prayer of the Church and of its potential and then guidelines for selection of the appropriate content. This is necessary in part because of the observed rising proportion of people for whom the prayer and language of the Office may well be unfamiliar, be they the more recently ordained, those from training courses rather than theological colleges, evangelicals and so on. But this is also in part because historic developments in the usage of the Office have stressed some elements at the expense of others and where *Common Worship* now offers greater choice and flexibility there is no particular guidance about the story and rationale behind what one might choose and why or how one might choose it. It seems as if the Church ignores or has forgotten that the Office has, in Storey's words, a 'long background of misunderstanding and slow decay' (1976, p68) so communicating the advantages, requirements and possibilities of the Office necessarily now requires an active and thoughtful approach with those in training and those in ministry.



Cutts makes the point that the Office has both changed too much and too little (1982, p31) and is stuck in a place that no longer serves the individual nor the institution. The present introduction to Morning and Evening Prayer refers to the central core of the Office as 'the Liturgy of the Word interwoven with canticles to supply the response of praise, followed by intercessory prayer in one form or another.' (2000, p29). This is reflective of the overly monastic emphasis, reinforced by a didacticism common to the Reformation that Cutts also refers to. I believe, given the evolving history of the Office, that praise, scripture and intercession need now to be held equally in balance with an increased flexibility and greater freedom on the part of the praying individual and community. This is in fact a re-balancing of the focus and purpose of the Office that was proposed as long ago as 1856 by John Mason Neale in the *Ecclesiologist* journal (Jasper, 1954, p77)!

The present rubrics offered in *Common Worship* however are intended to comply with those of the preceding, and newly introduced, *A Service of the Word*. The rubrics of this service are much closer in form and intention to what is being suggested in this chapter. They state:

'It consists almost entirely of notes and directions and allows for considerable local variation and choice within a common structure. It is important that those who prepare for and take part in *A Service of the Word* should have a clear understanding of the nature of worship and of how the component parts of this service work together. Leading people in worship is leading people into mystery, into the unknown and yet the familiar. This spiritual activity is much more than getting the words or sections in the right order. The primary object in the careful planning and leading of the service is the spiritual direction which enables the whole congregation to come into the presence of God to give him glory' (2000, p21).

It is rather as if the author of this introduction felt free from the perceived constraints of Morning and Evening Prayer, as if its form and content, as it has evolved, were experienced as something of a straightjacket, though it may of

course also be the case that the institutional politics of liturgical revision meant a more conservative or biblically focused articulation of the principles were required. Either way the result is that what is offered here in Common Worship for A Service of the Word is actually what could more usefully and practically be offered more explicitly elsewhere with Morning and Evening Prayer.

My approach here aims of course to do just that: to bring the suppleness and freedom offered for A Service of the Word over to the saying of the daily Office. In line with this, the possibility that the pattern of Morning and Evening Prayer need not be identical needed to be raised, reflecting both the ancient story of the Office and the present experience and practice of many of the respondents to the questionnaire. Above all, while clarity will be important, what is not desired is over simplification as the Office is too rich a resource for that; witness one respondent's comment that,

*'an important dynamic for me is that the Office is relatively complicated: those who come to join us have to learn the order. This is in distinction to the Sunday Eucharist, when we go out of our way to make the liturgy beginner-friendly, with the consequent sense for people like me that although it is the right thing to do, we are losing important ritual etc. The Daily Office's complication restores my sense of balance!'*

*Common Worship* was succeeded by more than one attempt to inform and guide its users. In 2001 the Alcuin Club, through SPCK, published volume one of *A Companion to Common Worship*. In 2002 Praxis, in conjunction with Church House Publishing, published a practical guide to the new services, with a volume dedicated to the provisions for Daily Prayer. In 2006 the second volume of the Alcuin Club's *Companion* followed, although some of the topics addressed were replications of what was in the first, although at times dealt with very differently. Readers concerned with the Office would need to look at the relevant sections in both volumes, on A Service of the Word in Volume One, which heading includes Morning and Evening Prayer, and on Daily Prayer in Volume Two, which

addresses Morning and Evening Prayer as well as what is here referred to as Prayer during the Day (rather than *Common Worship's* title of A Service of the Word) and Night Prayer. The Praxis series aimed to

'provide liturgical resources that encourage worshipping communities to take account of the pastoral needs of the congregation and the mission imperative of worship.....bridging the gap between the bare texts and the experience of using those texts in worship' (Fletcher, 2002, pvii).

The Alcuin volumes were introduced as 'an interpretive guidebook' (Bradshaw, 2001, foreword). With both the desire to address the widest possible audience and be in step with the common and public nature of the liturgy and prayer these missed the possibility of more successfully addressing the smaller but more influential audience of the clergy themselves, something that this research project aims to do.

The material on daily Prayer in all three books is generally structured around an historical introduction, a discussion of the contents of the Office, followed by or interspersed with some guidance or suggestions as to usage. Each of the historical overviews supplied are approximately 5,000 words in length and while they manage the task of presenting the relevant material coherently and informatively their chapter length will inevitably restrict the reading of them by a clerical audience. Additionally they seem to present the story of the Office, and its various incarnations, primarily as background and do not suggest that this has any direct relevance to any present situation nor to any choices that might be appropriate or necessary to make. In contrast I have offered both a shorter, and therefore more accessible, summary with clearer pointers arising towards possible varieties of form, content and pattern.

Additionally the paper invites clergy to reflect on the present context of their ministry and how that may affect or suggest alterations to the pattern of daily prayer, its timing, content and location. For example, the existence of a daily

Eucharist could be seen to complement the practice of the Office and the presence there of a penitential rite and two reasonably substantial scriptural readings might as a result obviate any felt need for the former or suggest shorter readings with regard to the latter. For some a daily routine that is unvarying will be more supportive, while for others a changing pattern may be more satisfying, one that adapts differently to days when other people might be around to join in as well as to the presence of other forms of public worship. In any reflection it is hoped to engage the imagination of the cleric concerned, both in terms of what they presently do and what they might do. The possibilities of silence are mentioned both in the historical introduction and in the questions for reflection; for whilst I wanted to avoid being too didactic or zealous about an aspect of prayer that is personally important to me, and to many of the respondents to the questionnaire, I did want to redress something of the institutional neglect around it (for example it does not appear in the index of either of the Alcuin commentaries on *Common Worship*) as well as to draw attention to it because of its transformatory possibilities and its valued place in the wider story of prayer and of the encounter between God and his people. Indeed it may be that the historic neglect of the origin of part at least of the daily Office in Greek philosophy has helped undermine a key element of the usage and potential of the Office, only now being reclaimed. Where dissatisfaction with the Office was articulated by respondents to the questionnaire their comments were often around the missing element of reflectivity, central to the practise of Greek philosophy, and seen there as key for the liberation of the self, transformation of vision and metamorphosis of the whole. It was variations of all these elements clergy sought to introduce into their saying of the Office or to search for elsewhere, outside the formal prayer of the Church.

This proposal is also in line with some of the current shifts taking place within the discipline of theology itself, noted above (chapter 4). It is to claim practically the notions of 'un-gating', 'un-making' and of 'coming home': to invite and enable the possibilities that can be released by a reflective encounter between faith, ministry and life, the formal prayer of the Church interacting with the individual's story, personal experience and hopes and desires. This is not something necessarily new, as those clergy for whom the praying of a daily Office has come fully to be a duty and a joy can and do attest. But it is to extend such creative possibilities to those for whom, for whatever reason or tradition of history, context, circumstance or personality, the praying of the daily Office has been a limited or only two-dimensional experience. Thus this proposal is also to make a contribution to the reintegration of the rational and emotional functions, and to reset the discipline of the Office firmly within the tradition and potential of an unfolding process of religious formation. Pritchard has commented on the 'bread and butter' nature of the Office suggesting thereby that that was an insufficient diet for prayer, 'jam and cream' being also required (2007, p25). This research proposal should stand against such a reductionist view of the Office and enable a richer and fuller expression and experience that could and should supply more than a sufficient amount for the daily prayer of the priest or deacon.

With any such development the present constraints and guidance of Canon law need respecting. Earey discusses the desirability of moving in liturgical matters from a juridical and legal framework to a relational one, based on trust between local churches and clergy and their bishop (2013, p138) but the Church is not there yet. The rubrics for the saying of Morning and Evening Prayer and for the Service of the Word in Common Worship, discussed above, will be the primary point of reference, since being authorized Forms of Service they therefore

automatically meet the requirements of the Canons. If not, then Canon B 5 may be adverted to. This Canon covers the discretion clergy have in public prayer and states that (Church of England, 2013):

1. The minister who is to conduct the service may in his discretion make and use variations which are not of substantial importance in any form of service authorized by Canon B 1 according to particular circumstances.
2. The minister having the cure of souls may on occasions for which no provision is made in *The Book of Common Prayer* or by the General Synod under Canon B 2 or by the Convocations, archbishops, or Ordinary under Canon B 4 use forms of service considered suitable by him for those occasions and may permit another minister to use the said forms of service.
3. All variations in forms of service and all forms of service used under this Canon shall be reverent and seemly and shall be neither contrary to, nor indicative of any departure from, the doctrine of the Church of England in any essential matter.
4. If any question is raised concerning the observance of the provisions of this Canon it may be referred to the bishop in order that he may give such pastoral guidance, advice or directions as he may think fit, but such reference shall be without prejudice to the matter in question being made the subject matter of proceedings under the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1963.

Given the latitude articulated in the rubrics and the possibility of additional 'variations which are not of substantial importance' mentioned in the Canon the likelihood is that anything selected or proposed as a result of the informed reflective exercise I am proposing here will be canonically acceptable. In doubt there is the possibility of referring the question to the bishop, mentioned in the Canon. But there are other resources for consultation as well: each diocese has a liturgical adviser who may be consulted; and other relevant advice can also be obtained variously from the websites for *Common Worship*, the Liturgical Commission's *Transforming Worship* and that of the organisation Praxis as well. There is something further though and that is to reflect on all that has been considered in the light of God's love. White suggests this as a requirement (1996, p.143), the scrutiny of divine love acting as a 'safety net' through which the issue must be strained, a net woven out of all the strands of doctrine and the act

of trawling with it involving the possibility of uncovering further perspectives. In the light of this I propose to articulate the theology and potential of the Office by using the terminology of the logophatic Office which will summarise much of the thought undergirding both the present investigation undertaken by myself and the understanding and usage of the Office as reported by the clergy, and the reflection on both in the light of what we know of God's love.

#### **6.4 The Logophatic Office**

Balthasar briefly in his writings touches on what he calls an 'existential theology' (1970, p71) where the truth, as say evidenced by the lives of St Paul and Thérèse of Lisieux, is realised in and through one's own life and being. The individual, through the working of the Holy Spirit, can look to themselves, experience within themselves the working of God's grace, become aware of unfolding sanctity and even use their own experience and the work of God within themselves as an illustration or example for others.

What is being modelled here is the synthesis of many opposites, not least that between what it means to be human and what it means to be divine, which synthesis can also be seen in the Church and as represented above all of course in the person of Jesus Christ. This is of importance here because the Office stands at this nexus of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, with the Church, the body of Christ, and with the individual priest or member of the clergy. Not only does the Office stand at this nexus it is also one of the prime means by which the process of integration and sanctification is carried forward. As has been seen the rationale for the daily Office has been variously understood over time as a liturgical re-enactment of the life of Jesus, the offering of the Church, the sanctification of time and the on-going formation of the individual and here all these combine. As Davies puts it, the Christian Scriptures teach us that the world

is irreversibly permeable to the power of God but that is only appropriated by ourselves 'in our still reversible participation in Christ' (2013, p148). The Office enables, deepens and stabilises that still reversible participation.

With regard to the Church Balthasar sees her as both charism (represented by the person of Mary and so Marian) and institution (represented by St Peter and so Petrine) but these are inseparably united, because the Holy Spirit dwells in the Church as both objective and subjective Spirit: that is, as institution or rule and as inspiration. The Marian principle of the Church is however 'deeper and closer to the centre' (Balthasar, 1982, p351) since it sustains and undergirds all other models of the Church and enables the Church to develop 'a spiritual perception and sense of touch for all that pertains to her Son' and so a healthy absorption with the Son that brings about an indifference to and an overcoming of the tensions and dualities that beset and can distract both the institution and the individuals comprising the institution. Indeed the developments in theology that have been remarked on above are in line with this reclaiming of the Marian principle. With regard to the individual,

'in spite of all the dialectic he detects in his existence between his grace-filled and his sinful self, he does not for all that suffer from a hidden schizophrenia, but that, rather, everything can occur within a lived unity and a sheltered repose' (Balthasar, 1982, p363).

Because of the Christological synthesis achieved in the incarnation and death of Jesus he suggests the apparent contradictions of humanity as both nature and spirit are resolved; as indeed the sinful incapacity of the human heart for love 'is overcome, because it is expiated, borne away, and freed from the paralysing pressure of fate.' Thus the aspirations of mysticism can be fulfilled 'by there being a true "appearance" of God as the salvation of man...he makes the world transparent for the divine to "appear" through it.' Because of this same synthesis the negative philosophy of humanity's inability to be whole is taken up by a



positive philosophy of revelation: thus humanity 'is to be understood within the space prepared by God's love, in which he is already affected by love: trained by it, directed toward it, freed and fated for it' (Balthasar, 1972, p102f).

The sending of the Holy Spirit enables the unique historical deed of Jesus to become interior to the narrow, finite consciousness of man, so

'it is a force, pressing up from inside man's deepest depths, encouraging him, and empowering him to enter on the venture of Christian love' being 'the microcosm of the macrocosm assigned to him' (Balthasar, 1972, p112).

The holiness spoken of here has both an institutional and a personal aspect, the objective holiness of the Church balancing and being fed by the subjective holiness of the individual. The individual here is understood to comprise both the laity and the clergy but the clergy are the primary focus since they are there for the laity and as they stand nearer to

'the Church's objective sources of holiness...the more they are obliged to make their lives like, and ready for, the objective holiness which they serve, which they protect' (Kehl, 1982, p376).

The obligation to say the Office on the part of the clergy emerges then here not so much as an ascetical discipline but as a practical safeguard. For God has an idea and a call for each one of us which involves some sort of intimacy with and participation in the divine and while to realise this idea is every Christian's highest goal it is a particular invitation for the clergy.

Thérèse of Lisieux is quoted as saying (Kehl, 1982, p377), 'I want to fulfil your will perfectly and to reach the stage of holiness which you have prepared for me in your Kingdom; in a word, I request that I be holy.' Holiness then can be seen as the highest degree of both human self-realisation and of Christian maturity that the clergy are called to and the idea crops up in a variety of comparable ways in a variety of disciplines.

'I would suggest that "growing into Christ" is not so much a metaphysical mystery as a psychological reality. It is learning to be Christian through the imitation of (or 'conformity to') Christ. The most effective place for such an attitude-change is in the worshipping community. For there we celebrate Christ as the model of humanity and the incarnation of the values of maturity.' (Astley, 1992, p317).

Intimacy with Jesus and self-awareness growing in step was an insight of Ignatius Loyola in the second week of his Spiritual Exercises and has been the subject of theological research (Maddox, 2004). This on-going and increasing conformity to Christ has also been cast in terms of logophasis, which includes a significantly apostolic dimension, of particular relevance to the clergy. Nelstrop develops the idea whereby logophasis articulates the place of 'the contemplative speaking as the mouthpiece of God, becoming, through their deeds and discourse, the Word who speaks.' (2013, p.192) The text and language of the Office becomes here not then informative but transformative. Logophasis bridges the divide between the kataphatic and apophatic, and that between the contemplative and active life. Nelstrop quotes Bernard of Clairvaux in his suggestion of a threefold spiritual progression, in which souls are led from action to contemplation and back into a second form of action, consisting of the call to preaching and pastoral care (2013, p.201). The contemplation of the Office is on more than one kind of word, scripture, life experiences, the needs of others; but all are part of the word, the word spoken to us and the word seeking to be spoken through us. Milbank (1997, p123f) writes in line with this of humanity's poetic existence which should be considered in three ways, as an activity, a mode of knowledge or a way of understanding, and the ethical behaviour by which we develop as human beings – *poesis* and *praxis* being inseparable. The significance of this 'poetry' is that humanity is an animal that gratuitously makes meaningful objects and in this activity both becomes human and fulfils humanity's need 'to catch up with its own proper destiny' (Milbank, 1997, p125). This further

articulation of the paradigm of the human person as a ‘fundamentally poetic being’ (quoted in Davies, 2001, p149) stresses our capacity to construct meanings ‘which as a form of creativity, aligns humanity with the divine *ars* of the *verbum*’. What the Office possesses in potential and, over time in actuality, is the enabling of the movement from text and the act of reading through friendship to encounter towards contemplation and transformation in an increased identification with the word made flesh and in bearing fruit in ministry. Moreover it should be remembered that the goal and focus here is not intimacy with God as an end in itself nor in more enjoyable experiences in prayer; the goal is apostolic and must remain focused on the doing of the Father’s will and the building of the kingdom of his son. As Gawronski puts it, ‘all extraordinary spiritual experiences become adjuncts, helpful perhaps, but mere grace notes to a far simpler, more incarnate and more comprehensive melody’ (1995, p214). All, however, in freedom witnessing afresh to the life of Christ, offered anew each day in prayer and in life.

## **6.5 An Addition**

One of the main fruits of this research is this ‘An Office for the Future?’ document and it is of course at this point unclear whether its dissemination will remain haphazard or ultimately find a more consistent or comprehensive outlet. Just as it is unclear whether the effect of reading and pondering its contents will be of passing interest but not of longer term benefit or whether actually it may have the potential to build on all that *Common Worship* has enabled and release more of the potential for prayer it offers, for the present and for the future. For this suggested approach is by way of developing more creatively the existing services and provisions as supplied by *Common Worship* and those that are still valid in *The Book of Common Prayer*; it is all work in progress.

Some suggested that the document was too long and that further editing would be necessary for it to find widespread use by the clergy. But it could also be judged that it is too short, for what is lacking in it is the insights of liturgy, theology and spirituality that can contribute a persuasive rationale for the Office and its daily usage. It may well be therefore that the following could usefully be added, and as it draws on what has already been explored in this thesis it is cast in the same typeface and format as the original 'An Office for the future?' document for clarity and consistency:

### **On the daily Office**

Jeremy Taylor wrote, 'ordination is a collation of holy graces of sanctification; of a more excellent faith, of fervent charity, of providence and paternal care: gifts which now descend not by way of miracle, as upon the apostles, are to be acquired by human industry, by study and good letters'. This notion of necessary industry, particularly around reading, is here added to the grace of God that we have received and is a vital ingredient when we come to reflect on the spirituality of those of us in ministry. In Hauser's more contemporary words, 'the challenge of priestly spirituality is to develop rhythms of living in tune with the Spirit so that the Spirit can animate each aspect of priestly identity and transform the priest into a truly effective person-symbol of Christ'. Now the holiness spoken of here has both an institutional and a personal aspect, the objective holiness of the Church balancing and being fed by the subjective holiness of the individual.

And while much of this applies to the laity as well it is good to remember that we stand nearer, in Medard Kehl's words, to 'the Church's objective sources of holiness...so the more they are obliged to make their lives like, and ready for, the objective holiness which they serve, which they protect'. So the obligation on the part of the clergy to some kind of daily prayer, some kind of daily connecting to the vision and grace extended to us emerges then here not so much as an ascetical discipline but as a practical safeguard. For God has an idea and a call for each one of us which involves some sort of intimacy with and participation in the divine and while to realise this idea is every Christian's highest goal it is a particular invitation for the clergy.

Reading lies at the heart of the practise of saying the Office and Pierre Hadot speaks of reading as a spiritual exercise and comments that, 'we have forgotten how to read: how to pause, liberate ourselves from our worries, return into ourselves, and leave aside our search for subtlety and originality, in order to meditate calmly, ruminate, and let the texts speak to us...As Goethe said: "Ordinary people don't know how much time and effort it takes to learn how to read. I've spent eighty years at it, and I still can't say that I've reached my goal."' Marcel Proust goes further and speaks of the act of reading in terms of friendship. Friendship, like reading, can have the aspect and character of a purely human experience or, on the other hand, it can be one of the key Christian virtues and both open us to influence by the mind and heart of the other. Friendship and its resulting intimacy have been spoken of as one of the hall-marks of any proper Christian maturity and the word itself shares the same root as the word freedom(Carmichael, 2004, p180), another central Gospel value. So the daily recitation of the Office may well then be best cast as an integral part of a process of befriending: the Office enabling the further and on-going befriending of Scripture, of oneself, of one's vocation and of God - as well as the means of the further and on-going befriending by God himself.

Cranmer's 3<sup>rd</sup> exhortation at Holy Communion in the BCP contain the words – 'then we dwell in Christ and Christ in us; we are one with Christ and Christ with us'. This on-going and increasing conformity to Christ reminds us as well that prayer and the use of Scripture is not then just intended to be informative but transformative, and this process of transformation may at times challenge or be uncomfortable for us

Catherine Pickstock argues that the whole task of liturgy involves the act of praise that is itself 'dispossessing'. This 'dispossessing' is an appropriate losing of the sense of ego self which involves a lowering of defenses and a relinquishing of habitual patterns, so ultimately involving a certain personal as well as communal 'ungating'. This 'ungating' of course underlines liturgy's capacity for creative transformation but stresses the vulnerability required for our whole selves to be open to be received and graced by God. Discipline is part of what defines an Office not just because of its place in Canon Law but because from the earliest centuries the daily offering of prayer was an integral part of what defined the Church and was how its individual members enabled the regular sacrifice of praise to God, which fulfilled the perpetual daily sacrifices of the Old Testament. The daily discipline of prayer was therefore a matter of communal and

personal identity, achieved in offering and sacrifice, as well an invited free response to the call from God.

This will inevitably involve an act of will, choice and commitment over time involving both effort and industry, rather like the investment we make in the relationships, such as friendships, and in the activities that are really important to us. Of course graced affective moments will come, when the prayer seems rich and fruitful, but these are side benefits not the main purpose. Myriad benefits will be revealed over time but may not be apparent in the short term, which is why an interplay of duty with joy is required. For to say the Office will not always appear to be meaningful or fruitful. William Perri comments that, 'empty prayers, the empty discipline, and the empty life can be symbolically meaningful as signs of the messianic, prophetic, and sacrificial roles' that comprise the vocation to ministry in the Church.

Evelyn Underhill commended 'the faithful repetition of appropriate acts that can deepen our understanding of the realities they are intended to convey' and even 'the monotony of these repetitions' can enable the soul to open out 'with increasing serenity on unlimited perspectives, felt rather than analysed, which converge on God.' But while notions of discipline in prayer may not be presently fashionable, set free from misconceptions or an overly narrow or legalistic perception elements of freedom and of joy can appropriately be balanced by an equally necessary sense of duty and obligation. The Office stands at the nexus of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, with the Church, the body of Christ, and with the individual priest or member of the clergy. Moreover not only does the Office stand at this nexus it is also one of the prime means by which the process of integration and sanctification is carried forward. The rationale for the daily Office has been variously understood over time as a liturgical re-enactment of the life of Jesus, the offering of the Church, the sanctification of time and the on-going formation of the individual and here all these combine. As Oliver Davies puts it, the Christian Scriptures teach us that the world is irreversibly permeable to the power of God but that is only appropriated by ourselves 'in our still reversible participation in Christ'(2013, p148). The Office enables, deepens and stabilises that still reversible participation.

The contemplation of the Office is on more than one kind of word and embraces scripture, our life experiences and the needs of others; but all are part of the word, the word spoken to us and the word seeking to be spoken through us. What the Office possesses in potential and, over time in actuality, is the enabling of the movement from

text and the act of reading through friendship to encounter towards contemplation and transformation in an increased identification with the word made flesh and in bearing fruit in ministry. Moreover it should be remembered that the goal and focus here is not intimacy with God as an end in itself nor in more enjoyable experiences in prayer; the goal is apostolic and must remain focused on the doing of the Father's will and the building of the kingdom of his son. So in the prayer of the Church we are invited in freedom to witness afresh to the life of Christ, offered anew each day by us in prayer and within us in our daily living and in our daily ministering.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

At the second Vatican council there was an opportunity for the revisers of the liturgy to make a significant departure from the historically recent and rather narrow perception of the Office as only a liturgy of the hours, effectively a breviary for the devotional use of the clergy to be recited mainly in private. Campbell recounts superbly (1995) the intricate negotiations and several moments of possible breakthrough before compromise was reached and many opportunities for flexibility and adaptability were apparently lost. The story of the revision of the Office for *Common Worship* was a very different one and the possibilities of a new flexibility and variety were successfully introduced, although in such a way as to mitigate some of the possibilities. The clergy of the Church of England today are not presently sufficiently informed or equipped to take advantage of the developments and need both more information and background along with the chance to reflect on the various possibilities that may be appropriate for their temperament and circumstance. The momentum of the monastic and cathedral understanding of the Office remains strong and needs also to be counter-weighted. Yet the value of the daily Prayer seems incontrovertible, with all the shortcomings of its present manifestation, as witnessed to by so many of the respondents to the research questionnaire. As

one respondent commented, *'unlike work which has no end an Office-d day is properly begun and finished'*.

This representation of the rich and varied possibilities of the Office and the chance for individuals to reflect on what is currently appropriate for them in their situation aims to enable the Office to flourish and adapt to the glory of God and the ongoing formation and spiritual health of the Church and her ministers. Yet the main future challenge may well be for the institution of the Church and those who train and help form the clergy on her behalf to adapt and respond with regard to all that they do, or do not presently do, in communicating this vital resource for prayer and for ministry.



## Chapter 7 Conclusion

*The research question is re-stated and a summary of the answers arising from the research is given. The research process is reviewed and then possible ways forward are discussed.*

### **7.1 The usage, understanding and theology of the daily Office amongst Anglican clergy today**

*In this section I summarise the findings of the Questionnaire, presented above, under the three points of focus contained in the title of this thesis.*

#### **7.1.1 Usage**

A high proportion of clergy reported praying the Office on a daily basis (85%) and while some prayed the Office at home (29%) most prayed the Office in Church either usually (42%) or occasionally (26%) and often with colleagues (41%). For many (47%) the Office was a matter of a once rather than twice daily obligation, and it became clear that two groups tended not to pray the Office on days off or holidays, these being the more recently ordained and those from the evangelical tradition. A lack of a stable and continuous pattern of praying the Office can be accounted as creative flexibility for some as it also emerged that the prayer was more integrated into respondents' life, ministry and other forms of prayer than I had imagined. The majority of respondents (71%) used a form of the Office derived from *Common Worship*, supplemented for some by other material, and usually using only a printed book for this (76%) though the trend is for more accessing the daily Office through phone apps. Respondents who had once prayed the Office, but subsequently desisted, reported as continuing a practice of daily prayer, though in forms seen as different from the Office. This brings us to the question of how the Office is understood.

### **7.1.2 Understanding**

The sense of the communal nature of the Office was strong, both with regard to praying in step with others around the world and in terms of praying for the needs of the wider community and the world. The sense of obligation on the part of the clergy seemed, in line with this, more about being collegial and seeking connection in some way rather than merely responding to some institutional requirement. The consecration of time and the worship of God came next as articulations of the purpose of the Office, followed by the discipline required by being in ministry and finally the encounter with Scripture. While the benefits and fruits of the Office should not be confused with the Office itself this range of understanding was reinforced when respondents were asked to comment on the various elements of the Office and how they valued them. It would seem the best summation is in seeing the Office as a family of prayer and practices located around the praise of God, Scripture and intercession which carry the potential for wonder, an unfolding and transforming knowledge of God and engagement with life and the wider world. Whilst each individual's particular understanding varies, they do vary within this family of prayer and practices, coloured as well by their positive and negative experiences of the Office obtained through their training and the subsequent experience of ministry.

### **7.1.3 Theology**

The clergy were aware of the role of the Office in binding the individual to the institution of the Church as well as to God. It is relevant that those groups with less historical allegiance to the institution were those that had a pattern of prayer that was somewhat different from the rest, that is the evangelical and the more recently ordained respondents. What might be articulated as a present theology

of the Office therefore must reflect not only the necessary interplay between God, the individual and the institution but also the more recent shifts that have taken place within the discipline of theology itself, discussed in Chapter 2 above.

The prayer of the Office finds itself at the meeting place of embodied theology, spiritual exercise and apostolic endeavour. It is the interface between personal piety and public ministry, involving the rational and ruminative as well as the affective and contemplative, where the public life of the clergy comes face to face with their private stories and where both together have the potential to be transformed by the grace of God into a place of greater maturity and increased interior freedom, of greater intimacy with the person of Jesus. Thus it is a form of prayer that is profoundly self-implicating because it touches on both the public and the private, the communal and the personal, and is a part of Jesus' promise to his people, 'if you remain in my word you will become my disciples and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.' (John 8.31-33)

## **7.2 Critiquing the Research process**

*In this section I review the research undertaken, evaluate the strategies adopted and suggest both ways forward and further research possibilities.*

This research has involved a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods of research. I did not set out to prove or disprove a hypothesis; rather I sought strands of enquiry and reflection that might emerge from the data gathered and let theory evolve from the perceived relationships between those themes. This approach has been discussed more fully in Chapter 2.1 above but meant that realisations inevitably occurred as I went along about limitations in the questionnaire design. Additionally at the start I chose to conduct a more traditional empirically focused research strategy rather than adopting a specific,

and perhaps limiting, approach and design based on a particular paradigm. I asserted my methodology as a particularly Anglican one, appropriate as well given the research topic. As I come to the task of evaluating the research process a similar range of apparently alternative paradigms is offered. Though these can be articulated differently, Denzin & Lincoln (1998, p376f) discuss four possible and different approaches: a Postpositivist approach that values effectiveness and theory and focuses on whether the desired outcomes are attained in the most effective way possible; a Pragmatist approach that values utility and quality control that will focus on the parts that worked well and those that needed improvement and the relevance of the whole to the organisation and individuals concerned; an Interpretivist approach that values diversity and understanding that will focus on how the research is experienced by the various stakeholders; finally, a Critical Normative approach that values change and empowerment that will focus on the social and structural possibilities of the research.

On the methodological level this diversity of possible approaches to evaluation appears to cluster around the four agreed critical attributes of utility, feasibility, propriety and accuracy (Denzin, 1998, p383). Yet while some contest the mixing of enquiry approaches on a paradigm level I was drawn by the statement that

‘rather than believing that one must choose to align with one paradigm or another, I advocate a paradigm of choices. A paradigm of choices rejects methodological orthodoxy in favour of methodological appropriateness as the primary criterion for judging methodological quality. The issue then becomes...whether one has made sensible methods decisions given the purpose of the inquiry, the questions being investigated, and the resources available’ (Patton quoted in Denzin, 1998, p386).

And to that list Patton cites I would add the nature of the people being questioned, for the clergy, as with any particular profession, require an approach tailored to their way of being, doing and perceiving if they are to make a serious

response, as they have done here. Having at the beginning articulated my preference for a more pragmatic/realist paradigm, with its ethos appearing to parallel the Anglican approach to theology, I did at the same time wonder whether a Constructivist paradigm might help to illuminate the dimension of social action and change, though that too has more than an echo with Anglican perspectives (Chapter 2.6). And as I review here what I have done as a researcher to the fore are the questions of what would have strengthened the research strategies; what was of most relevance to the question and what was of less relevance; and, finally, what has emerged as of most use and application for the clergy, for the Church and for the future.

Among the areas that might have been addressed in the questionnaire were where the clergy were trained, what their marital status was and whether they had children at home or other particular family responsibilities. The latter area may have helped identify possible influences on their pattern of saying of the Office; the former would have been of great use when the issues of formation and training subsequently emerged. Additionally, since the communal aspects of the Office emerged as one of the dominant themes, questions aimed to elicit the attitudes of the individual to the Church as a whole would have been of interest and use, enabling a link to emerge if appropriate between any developed theology of and regard for the institution of the Church and the particular appreciation of the collegial aspect of the daily Office.

In retrospect also another area that might have been usefully engaged with is around habit and the associated research that continues around brain chemistry and addiction – one respondent talked of the Office as brainwashing and whilst there seemed a humorous aspect to that use of the term it touched on an aspect that could bear further exploration, since the effects of behaviour on the brain's

neural pathways are only just being explored, and it may be that the effects of habitual actions will be soon more clearly understood. Issues of guilt were not extensively developed but were hinted at by a few of the respondents and could also be an area of further attention.

What in retrospect appears to have been of less significance was the attempt to relate issues around saying the Office to an individual's psychological profile. There was difficulty in tapping the probable significance of the psychological dimension and the majority of the clergy did not remember the descriptors by which they would have come to be identified. A questionnaire on its own could not have been adequate for the satisfactory development of this part of the investigation, but nor did I then have enough relevant information from the questionnaire to adapt to this circumstance and create an alternative strategy such as follow-on, focused interviews. So perforce I ended up by accepting it as business that would have to remain unfinished. Additionally, I think it would have been better to have had a more extended period of data gathering since a two year period over against the one year period I utilised would have allowed for much greater access to clergy through diocesan conferences, the most fruitful access point, and this would have meant it possible as well to get a more consistent geographical spread. As it was the profile of respondents matched significantly national statistics for age, gender and ministry but were largely drawn from the south.

Scheidt speaks of the self-implicating nature of the study of spirituality (2005, p18) , and so the lack of true objectivity that is thought to be of relevance now to every researcher is even more so the case with a researcher in the field of spirituality and theology. I have myself become increasingly aware of the influence that my own context, experience and beliefs brought to bear on the

development of the research project and the content and framework of the research design. This began with the use of language as over the months I became conscious that my use of the terminology of the 'Divine Office', my usage for nearly thirty years, both narrowed, for some, the field of the research questions and alienated others by its associations with Roman Catholicism. A switch to the usage of the daily Office greatly helped matters, occasionally with the explanatory rider that I was referring to the daily formal prayer of the Church. I also had to adjust my own understanding of the discipline of the Office in the face of the many respondents who prayed formally only once daily or on only some days of the week. I had always taken the clerical commitment to mean the daily saying of Morning and Evening Prayer but identified a period of time over the summer months of 2013 when I committed myself only to praying the Office each morning so as to experience a different pattern and different level of commitment and that experience also informed my analysis of the answer to the research question contained in the section above. I realised after the event I had fused the terminology of priest and clergy, sometimes using one and sometimes the other. And whereas the words daily and divine when connected to the Office mean the same thing, the terms priest and clergy do not (in that all priests are clergy but not all clergy are priests). This was picked up by some deacon respondents but none appeared to stop answering the questions or were not willing to adapt themselves to them accordingly.

Within an Interpretivist paradigm the individual qualities and perspectives of the researcher are seen not as hindering any desired objectivity but as 'indispensable to meaning construction,' (Denzin, 1998, p391). So as researcher I shaped the research and also influenced the interpretation and presentation of the data and, as a priest, was part of the investigation, my own reactions and experience being

a register of attention and interpretation. The possible dangers of this self-implication are articulated by Schneiders as methodological narcissism:

‘Personal anecdotes, no matter how numerous, interesting or supportive of one’s prejudices, do not constitute evidence...somehow, the researcher has to gain methodologically valid access to subjective data without denaturing the experience or getting mired in the purely private and idiosyncratic’ (2005, p18).

This has been avoided in this research in part because of the mix of quantitative and qualitative data, so the subjective has been more easily balanced by the objective, and in part it is the voice of the respondents, rather than my own, variously articulated and quoted, that has informed and fleshed out the evidence. Self-implication also means that I leave the research changed in more ways than one. In addition to the academic and professional insights arising from the process of research my own understanding of the daily Office has broadened and deepened over the time of the research project and I have now a much stronger appreciation of its communal aspects as well as a much clearer appreciation of its core elements and its interdependency with the wider patterns and practices of prayer rooted in daily Christian living.

### **Key Outcomes**

A critical part of this research has been to develop and trial a remedy to the issue of the inadequacy of how the clergy today are introduced to the prayer of the Office.

I have in chapter 6 given some of the initial feedback to the proposed ‘An Office for the future?’ and some indication of its possible uses. The idea for this document arose directly from the research and its content from reflection prompted by the results. Its possible uses centre around the attempt to inform the clergy and those training for ordination of the possibilities of the Office and its



core elements, to challenge some of the pre-conceived ideas about the prayer and its contents and to engage the clerical imagination over its practical adaptations and possibilities given their own present circumstances and location. The initial participants in the questionnaire often expressed their enthusiasm for the implications of the research and interest in its possible outcomes: *'Good project!'* *'I'll be interested in the outcomes'*, *'Thank you for the opportunity to reflect on some of the issues'*, *'It's been really good to think about these things – thank you'*. The test sample of clergy who responded to the later 'An Office for the future?' were, as has been seen, also positive with some specific suggestions and comments that have already been reported. In some cases people's present understanding and practice was reported as satisfactory and not in need of further reflection or revision. But in some cases what I am proposing as a result of this research has been greeted with relief, excitement and the realisation of practical change and spiritual, personal and professional growth. As one of the clergy wrote in response to the 'An Office for future?' paper,

*'I think this is FABULOUS!!! I wish someone had given me this when I was first ordained, as the section on duty & joy would have made so much difference to my approach to the Office (which is with a downcast look and a grumble - as it isn't 'my thing'). I was also very taken by the idea of Bible Study being a form of prayer, and the questions throughout made it collaborative and thought-provoking. Certainly, this has given me plenty to think about, and...also plenty to add/change in my Rule of Life.'*

The research process itself would seem to have not only sufficiently fulfilled the methodological criteria of utility, feasibility, propriety and accuracy but also has proved to have been a form of ministry to those clergy involved and, regardless of what the future may hold for the research outcomes, this is a benefit that was not expected but which would seem of undoubted importance in its own right.

### **7.3 Where next.....afterword**

I was asked by two of the dioceses who permitted me to approach their clergy with regard to completing the questionnaire to return in due course with a report of the findings of the research. One such visit is planned for 2014 and the other for 2015, both dioceses wanting not just an academic or theoretical account but something that could be practical and help deepen the prayer of their clergy. The other bodies who allowed me access to their databases will receive a report, and this will in each case include both a summary of the findings and an edited version of 'An Office for the Future?' for their use as appropriate. Two of the grant making bodies who have supported this research project have made similar requests, the Chichester Theological Trust and the Cleaver Ordination Candidates Fund. Additionally a number of the respondents asked also for a copy of the findings or at least a summary of the learnings and they will receive the same.

White argues that theology must be a preamble to mission, and that for the Church 'all internal discourse must be capable of being translated into worship and apologetics – and service' (1996, p143). Where then might this research take us?

As I look back at my own practice of praying the Office I have, as many other clergy could echo in their own way, variously prayed it day by day, morning and evening with the people of the parishes I have served in. But also in all sorts of other circumstances and situations, be that in a derelict house waiting for a builder; at daybreak in the ruins of Sparta; in bed with a cup of tea; weekly in the evening at the Centre for Spirituality bookshop; on a train; with a hangover; in times of sorrow and times of joy; through times of boredom; with the nuns at Bec, not understanding a word but transported by the music of their voices; at an

airport waiting for the luggage; in a deserted basilica; with friends on holiday; in a bus stop whilst sheltering from the rain. Neither my experience nor that of the majority of the respondents to this research questionnaire suggest there is a crisis in the praying of the Office by the clergy of the Church of England today, at least such a crisis as was suggested by the authors reviewed in Chapter 1.

However there would seem to be a crisis, or at least a challenge, in the way the institution of the Church explains and presents the Office to those in training for ordination, since generally this seems to be lacking and inadequate for the present situation and present generations of the clergy, as can be judged from the outcomes seen through this research project. Notions of teaching and discipline around personal and daily prayer that were reclaimed by the Anglican Church in the nineteenth century (see Chapter 3.1.6 above) appear to have been relinquished during the course of the latter part of the twentieth century, perhaps because it had been felt that that battle had been won and attention in the world of training and formation moved to more concrete outcomes. Where the obligation of the Office is communicated it is largely a matter of instruction about the required routine with no clarification of the creative flexibility and possibilities of its form and content and no sense of inspiration deriving from its potential and its ultimate part in God's invitation into mature Christian freedom and at-one-ment with his son, Jesus Christ.

Strategies therefore are needed to address both the individual and the institution of the Church, and with regard to the latter that would have to be by both the training institutions and the bishops. Recent work on building capacity in people to look after themselves and promote effectiveness describes (Christakis, 2010) how change in behaviour tends to spread through groups on the model of contagion. Indeed, one respondent to the questionnaire said, *'I circulated this to*

*my cell group, all of whom found it interesting and a good read - so thank you.'*

Another wrote, *'Many thanks indeed for this. We will be discussing it in our clergy team and asking where it might lead us...!'* and more recently further requests have been received for passing the paper on. This suggests that some of the possible ways forward cannot be planned but these may be the more effective for it.

Earey comments on the urgent need for liturgical training for the leaders of our churches (2013, p121) and this would address of course not just what is done but why and how it is done. The paper 'An Office for the future?' is an attempt to redress some of these short comings with individual clergy but this will not on its own address the institutional issue. Grove Books have been approached with a view to publication, as suggested by one of the respondents, since I judged that a booklet, Grove's usual format, is more likely to reach clerical attention than a book and this too has the possibility of reaching bishops and the staff of theological colleges and training courses.

It is hoped by presenting and re-casting it in this way something of the deeper and more transforming possibilities of the Office may come to be communicated, allowing the institution of the Church, clergy and ordinands to be inspired anew by this ancient and still evolving resource for prayer and ministry, venturing ever further into the mystery of Christian maturity and divine freedom.

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## APPENDICES

### 1. Matters psychological

The suggestion here is (p71) that those types who are naturally spontaneous and adventurous (eg ISFP and ISTP) will tend to avoid any prayer seen as a duty and imposed from outside by the Church; those who are NTs will tend to look for full understanding and mastery which might well cause problems when applied to an activity as mysterious as prayer; S-Ps may need help grounding their experience of God in the everyday; ENs have a tendency to lose focus and their prayer time can easily get eroded; while Js may well need help learning how to 'waste' time with God in prayer without feeling guilty.

Keating's approach groups Myers-Briggs types with different Christian spiritualities:

- Ignatian Spirituality appealing apparently to ISTJ, ISFJ, ESTJ, ESFJ, ISTP, ISFP;
- Salesian Spirituality fitting with INFJ, INFP, ENFP, ENFJ, ESFP
- Teresian Spirituality INTJ, INTP, ENTP, ENTJ, ESTP, ESTJ
- and the Spirituality of Teilhard de Chardin INFJ, INFP, INTJ, ENFP, ENFJ, ISFP, ESFJ (Keating, 1999, pp21-31)

Richardson's four ways of Unity, Devotion, Works and Harmony are linked to particular Myers-Briggs types:

- NT, Unity, with its hallmarks of the appreciation of life, nature, truth, clarity, social justice
- SF, Devotion, where spirituality is experienced as something present, accessible, personal and interactive
- ST, Works, order and tradition here are vital religious supports and steadiness and fidelity in response are highly valued
- NF, Harmony, manifesting adaptability, open symbols such as metaphor, the warmth of human presence, evolving ideals and an eclectic reservoir of resources

In the Enneagram the Feeling Triad comprises the Helper (number two with the characteristics or possibilities of encouragement, possessiveness and manipulation), the Status Seeker (number three manifesting, potentially or otherwise, ambition, pragmatism and narcissism) and the Artist (number four: sensitive, introverted and depressive). The Doing Triad comprises the Thinker (number five: perceptive, analytic, reductionist), the Loyalist (number six: committed, dutiful, passive-aggressive) and the Generalist (number seven: sophisticated, hyper-active, excessive). The Relating Triad comprises the Leader (number eight: self-confident, aggressive, confrontational), the Peacemaker (number nine: receptive, easy going, complacent) and the Reformer (number one: rational, orderly, perfectionist).

## 2. D.Th.Min Statement

*It is a King's requirement to include at this point an overview of the areas covered in the whole programme, highlighting the links between the taught subjects and the later work and exploring how the first has fed into the second.*

Before the third module on research methodologies led into the practically based and experimental Ministerial Focused Study, for which I chose the topic of House for Duty ministry in the Church of England today, there were prior modules in first Theology and Ministry and then The Role of the Minister. The first module covered matters of doctrine, moral theology and ethics and biblical studies. The second covered the areas of spirituality, education, culture and sociology, Church history and interdisciplinary study. This was the first purely academic study in theology I had done since my first degree twenty eight years previously. The range of subjects, the challenge of essay research and writing and the dynamic of being in a small and supportive study group made this a stimulating as well as reassuring start to the Doctorate. My early essays were exploratory in the sense of being part of an attempt to judge the level and approach suitable, though the second essay on The City in Scripture was later published as a chapter of a book and the third essay on A Philosophy of Spiritual Direction Training became an article in an American journal. The following two essays followed areas of personal interest that were current at the time and were part of the attempt to discover a topic of sufficient substance and passion that could be the focus of the Research Based Thesis. Although neither directly led to that aspects of both later fed into parts of this thesis and by closing down some areas forced me to look further on. The essays of course were but one part of the wider taught programme and each subject, discussion and resulting reflection contributed to a honing of a main area of interest, one in which it gradually became clear that I wanted to cover or combine theology, present day ministry, spirituality, formation and that which could be of practical use and interest to the clergy. The Ministerial Focused Study was my first experience of empirical research and nearly became my last given the difficulties I experienced negotiating the labyrinthine processes Kings College imposed for the obtaining of ethical approval – processes which had evolved to cope with sensitive areas of medical research being naturally rather over developed for the subject matter of Christian ministry. However it became an enjoyable and informative venture, and the results were used by the Church of England's Ministry Division in their preparation for a report on the same subject. It was also the assignment for which I received the lowest mark and in retrospect this acted as a spur for focus and effort when I came to plan and work on the thesis itself. Developing the patience and perseverance required to overcome the initial difficulties also proved invaluable later, during the questionnaire process of this research project.

Looking back I can now not imagine addressing any other subject through this thesis but as I review the journey of the last six years I can see how incrementally I came to this point. Bar the blip over ethical approval procedures it has been an unbelievably enjoyable and privileged journey and I am so grateful to those clergy who were so willing to share their experience, thoughts, feelings and ideas around the daily Office.

### 3. Questionnaire

*A full set of completed hard copies of the Questionnaire are available from the author and will be kept until 2018.*

#### **The usage, understanding and theology of the daily Office amongst Anglican clergy today**

The clergy of the Church of England are required by Canon law to pray the daily prayer of the church known as the Office (usually some kind of Morning and Evening Prayer). It is known that not all do so but it is unknown what the percentages involved are of those who do and those who don't. This research by Andrew Walker, based out of Kings College London, aims to establish the proportion of clergy who do pray the Office daily, how they do so and what effects they believe prayer, or its cessation, may have on their life and ministry. It is hoped this research will benefit both theological training for clergy and for those preparing to be ordained as well as providing an opportunity for individuals usefully to reflect on patterns and reasons for their daily prayer. The confidentiality of all taking part is protected and all will have access to the final report online or by email. Please see the attached Information Sheet for further details.

<b>Personal Information</b>			
1.	What is your age?	_____ years	
2.	In what year were you ordained as a deacon?		
3.	In what year were you ordained as a priest?		
4.	What is your gender?	.... Male .... Female	

<b>Nature of ministry</b>			
5.	Is your ministry...	.... Fulltime .... Part time	
6.	Are you....	.... Stipendiary .... Self-supporting .... House for Duty .... Retired .... Other (please specify)	
7.	Do you work mostly in....	.... Parish .... Chaplaincy (please specify kind of work)  .... Other (please specify)	
8.	Which words might you use to describe your church tradition? eg liberal, conservative, traditional, high, low, broad, evangelical, charismatic, catholic etc		

<b>Personality</b>			
9.	Overall, do you think of yourself as more...	.... Introverted .... Extraverted	
10.	If you have attended a Myers-Brigg (MBTI) personality type workshop and recall your type please write it here....		
11.	If you have attended an Enneagram workshop and recall your number please write it here....		

Experience of the Daily Prayer ('Office') of the Church		
12.	<p>In general, what is your pattern of praying the Office?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eg would you normally say it once or twice a day or more?</li> <li>- And how many days a week usually?</li> </ul>	<p>If you do not regularly pray a daily Office please go to question 22</p>
13.	Do you usually say a daily Office on days off?	Yes/No
14.	And when on holiday?	Yes/No
15.	What type of daily Office do you currently pray?	<p>.... Common Worship</p> <p>.... Franciscan</p> <p>.... Roman Breviary</p> <p>.... Book of Common Prayer</p> <p>.... Own devising</p> <p>.... Other (please specify)</p>
16.	In general, what source do you use?	<p>.... Prayer book</p> <p>.... Phone App or other electronic device</p> <p>.... Memory</p> <p>.... Other (please specify)</p>
17.	In general, what mode(s) do you use?	<p>.... Said</p> <p>.... Sung</p> <p>.... Both Said and Sung</p>
18.	In general, how do you pray it?	<p>.... Out loud</p> <p>.... Silently</p> <p>.... Both</p>
19.	In general, where do you pray the Office?	<p>.... At home</p> <p>.... At Church</p> <p>.... Other (please specify)</p>
20.	Most often, do you pray the Office alone or with others?	<p>.... Alone</p> <p>.... With others (please specify)</p>
21.	<p>If there have been significant changes in your practice over the years please explain of what nature (please write as much as you like)</p>	

**Please now continue with question 34**



Not currently praying a daily Office

Experience of not praying the Daily Prayer ('Office') of the Church		
22.	Have you have you ever regularly prayed the daily Office in the past?	.... Yes .... No - <b>If no, please go to question 41</b>
23.	What type of daily Office did you pray?	.... Common Worship .... Franciscan .... Roman Breviary .... Book of Common Prayer .... Own devising .... Other (please specify)
24.	In general, what source did you use?	.... Printed matter .... Phone App .... Memory .... Other (please specify)
25.	In general, what mode(s) did you use?	.... Said .... Sung .... Both Said and Sung
26.	In general, how did you pray the Office?	.... Out loud .... Silent .... Both Spoken and Silent
27.	In general, where did you pray the Office?	.... At home .... At Church .... Other (please specify)
28.	Most often, did you pray the Office alone or with others?	.... Alone .... With others (please specify)
29.	How long ago did you stop praying the Office?	.... years
30.	Looking back what do you think might have influenced your decision to stop praying the Office?	
31.	Did you replace the Office with any other kind of daily or regular prayer? Please elaborate if so....	
32.	How do you think/feel stopping praying a Daily Office has affected you? (ie in relationship with God or in your ministry as a Priest or with your personal development?)	

**Please continue with question 41**

Your opinion about the purpose, effects and elements of the Daily Office			
33.	Overall, what do you understand as the purpose of a Daily Office?		
34.	<p>How do you think praying a Daily Office has affected your relationship with God?</p> <p>Please tick or add your own statement as appropriate</p>	<p>.....It helps me feel closer to God</p> <p>.....It reinforces my sense of the divine in everyday life</p> <p>..... It enhances my wider experience of prayer</p> <p>.....other:</p>	
35.	<p>How do you think praying a Daily Office has affected your ministry as a Priest?</p> <p>Please tick or add your own statement as appropriate</p>	<p>.....It makes me feel part of the wider church</p> <p>.....It helps my experience of God in the everyday</p> <p>.....It gives me strength and undergirds my ministry</p> <p>.....other:</p>	
36.	<p>How do you think saying a Daily Office has affected your personal development?</p> <p>Please tick or add your own statement as appropriate</p>	<p>.....I feel it strengthens my sense of myself</p> <p>.....It helps me reconcile life's difficulties</p> <p>.....It gives me the space to grow as a person</p> <p>.....other:</p>	
37.	<p>How you would rate the following possible rationales of the daily Office?</p> <p>Please tick those you personally consider most important.</p>	<p>___ as consecration of time</p> <p>___ as the Church's offering</p> <p>___ for priestly formation</p> <p>___ an articulation of salvation history</p> <p>___ for personal discipline</p>	
38.	<p>How you would rate the following ingredients of the daily Office?</p> <p>Please tick those you personally consider most important.</p>	<p>___ Psalmody</p> <p>___ Intercession</p> <p>___ Scripture</p> <p>___ Confession</p> <p>___ Canticles</p>	
39.	<p>How you would rate the following possible forms of prayer with regard to the daily Office?</p> <p>Please tick those you personally consider most important.</p>	<p>___ Praise</p> <p>___ Meditation</p> <p>___ Supplication</p> <p>___ Contemplation</p> <p>___ Contrition</p>	

General questions about your life and ministry	
40.	What do you find most enjoyable about your ministry?
41.	What presently gives most meaning to your life?
42.	Is there anything you would like to add about your experience of or thoughts about the Office?

Would you be happy to be contacted about any of the answers you have given? If yes, please insert your contact details: Address:

Phone:

Email:

**Thank you very much for taking the time and trouble to complete this questionnaire.  
Please return to [andrew.walker@operamail.com](mailto:andrew.walker@operamail.com) or  
c/o St Michael's Rectory, St Andrew's Lane, Lewes, BN7 1UW**

#### **4. An Office for the future?**

*The purpose of this paper is to give some background in terms of the story of the Office over the Christian centuries. Then to invite reflection on some general questions about prayer and the relationship with God before setting out the three key ingredients of any Office (Praise and wonder, Scripture and the transforming knowledge of God, Intercession and engagement with the world) to suggest a framework for further reflection and possible choice. This may (or may not!) prove helpful for those who want to develop their usage of the daily prayer of the Church in a way more appropriate to their present experience and circumstances.*

The daily Office has been an ingredient of the clerical life from the earliest Christian centuries. It is regarded as playing a key part in maintaining the prayer of the Church in the ceaseless praise of God as well as enabling an ever better acquaintance with the Scriptures and fostering on-going professional and personal formation and being the means of the daily consecration of time. It is enshrined in Canon Law as a requirement, indeed the requirement, of the clerical state and the ideal stance is surely one that balances duty and joy, as the phrase in Eucharistic Prayer C has it. The element of duty helps maintain clerical integrity, ensuring we remain immersed in the narratives and perspectives of our shared faith – a transcendent resource in an otherwise largely empirical world. The element of joy balances the first and helps maintain the relevance and application of prayer to our daily living and activities, whether ministerial or otherwise. It ensures our vocation as something that remains alive and active in the present and it preserves our enthusiasm for the myriad ways of our God.

Archbishop Cranmer's vision of prayer that was 'common' in fact harked back to the earliest Christian centuries and a form of public daily prayer that was seen as the task of the whole gathered community and which seems to have been centred on the praise of God and offerings of prayer and intercessions, with special and different rituals to do with the light of evening and of morning. It seems more than likely that the practice of the early Church was influenced by and drew upon the patterns of Jewish piety as well as the practices of Hellenistic philosophy. Early monasticism, originally of course another lay movement, shifted the focus more towards the recitation of the psalms and the meditative reading of scripture. As monasticism became increasingly a clericalised movement and as religious houses took responsibility for the founding and running of the great cathedrals so this initial side-current, of focus on the psalms and the

Scriptures, became central to the story of the Office. Over time, as the clerical profession became more formalised and the singing of the Office more common, so the part of the wider laity tended to become that of occasional attenders and observers. The form of the different Offices of the day also became increasingly homogeneous as the various ritual and liturgical aspects declined, as did the provision for silent meditation. So the Office became increasingly a clerical liturgy of the word focused on psalmody and scripture, with praise and intercession taking second place. This rich and complex history does at least offer us today a broad palette from which we can draw a variety of practices and different points of focus to suit differing circumstances and temperaments whilst maintaining our part in the shared common prayer of the Church.

### **(Re-)Designing your daily Office - questions for reflection**

- What is the present context of your ministry and work?
- What has been your pattern of daily or regular prayer up to now?
- What have been the things you have appreciated or found difficult about such a pattern (be that timing, form, content, location, presence or absence of others, etc)?
- What of these do you have control over or might you like to do something about?
- What other forms of prayer are already part of the week for you (be that the Eucharist, prayer with colleagues, bible study, Julian groups etc)?
- Are there other forms of prayer that you miss? Or might be included in the praying of the Office? (such as silence, a review of the day or an Examen)
- It may be your present practice suits you and your circumstances and will continue to be your choice. If so, how would it be to give thanks to God for this continuing and sustaining gift?
- Or what regularity, frequency, variety and rhythm of prayer is going to work for you in the foreseeable future? (Some may find it helpful here to chart a usual week by day and by time, usually morning, afternoon and evening, and so clarify both any existing forms of prayer and what form or type of the Office may be appropriate or possible).

## **Praise and wonder**

Traditionally this element of the Office has been focussed on the use of hymns and of canticles, especially the Venite, Benedictus, Magnificat and Benedicite, though particular psalms (148-150) or scriptural passages (Revelation 7.12) also of course play their part. In part praise and wonder speaks as much about intention as content when it comes to the daily Office. It reminds us of the primacy of God as the source, focus, intention and goal of our life, calling and world. It reminds us too of the particular nature of our God as revealed in Christ: God as creator, redeemer and sustainer, God as love, God transcendent and immanent, God ever desiring to be in relationship with us and his world.

- So why are we doing it?
- Why would we like to be doing it?
- Who is God for us at the moment?
- How would we like our relationship with God to be?

Rather like the custom of saying Grace at meals the praise of God roots the various purposes of the Office, be that articulated as the consecration of time and the day, participation in the prayer of the Church or knowledge of Scripture or on-going personal and 'professional' formation.

Finally this focus on praise and wonder will prevent the Office falling into various possible distortions, such as legalism (saying it mainly because we are supposed to), rote (to be got through as quickly as possible), indulgence (this is my prayer and I'll do only what and when I feel like it) and wooliness (not being sure why we are doing what we are doing but hoping for the best!).

## **Scripture and the transforming knowledge of God**

Questions that may be helpful here in concluding what may be best and most appropriate for your daily prayer are:

- What other exposure to Scripture do you have during the week? (Bible notes, Eucharist etc)
- What is your main desire when reading Scripture here – to be reading the same as others 'in communion'? To be reading in course and cover the whole Bible over a period of time (and, if so, of what duration)? To be inspired or challenged by a brief-ish inspirational text?

- What part might periods of silence play – before, during or after?
- Will your main engagement with the text be one of recitation (quietly or out loud) or of meditation or of imaginative contemplation or another kind of contemplation?
- How might you be open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit in the various possible responses to the scripture read – be that towards penitence, further commitment, colloquy or something else?

### **Intercession and engagement with the world**

The prayer here can be informal or formal or a mixture of the two, particularly depending on how much of the Office is to be said privately and publicly, alone or with others. Informal prayer may be entirely spontaneous or follow the traditional Eucharistic pattern of intercession for Church, world, the sick and the dead or guided by some principle of the global and the local or those suggested by the head and those prompted by the heart. Formal prayer may comprise the given intercessions that are printed in Common Worship and also in the Breviary. They may follow a pre-decided set pattern, offered by an organisation like a diocese or church organisation such as the Church Society. Some have their own personally devised patterns; Bradshaw in writing in 'A Companion to Common Worship' (2006b, p13) suggests a simpler weekly cycle:

*Sunday:* creation; new creation; resurrection

*Monday:* economic life; business; agriculture

*Tuesday:* healing and wholeness

*Wednesday:* vocation; the needy and those who care for them

*Thursday:* unity; education; those in authority

*Friday:* the cross; penitence; reconciliation

*Saturday:* leisure, contemplation; saints; the dying and departed; the life of heaven

Or one might respect the ancient differentiation between the liturgies for evening and morning (the evening being the start of the new day in the ancient world) and have the focus of the intercessions of the evening as being around freedom from sin, being enlightened by Christ, those living in darkness etc and the focus for the intercessions of the morning being the new creation, the joy of the risen Christ, the gift of baptism and

so on. Another example of this can be found in 'Praise and prayer in all our days – The sanctification of time' by Br. Tristram SSF in the Franciscan Daily Office.

### **A Calendar?**

Finally should be mentioned the various possibilities of enriching the cycle of daily prayer with an observation of the seasons of the Church's liturgical year and of the days of remembering the saints. Michael Perham comments in 'The Communion of Saints' that Anglicanism has lost or indeed never incorporated the spontaneous local acclamation of those deemed to be worthy of naming and celebrating in any calendar, so the tendency is to rely on what is provided by central church authorities. This may be the Common Worship calendar of Holy Days, the Church Union's annual Ordo, the Roman lectionary or some other. In each case it seems likely the one who decides will perhaps be exercising at times discretion over what is observed or not, leaving out the more apparently irrelevant or inconvenient. This is a form of adaptation and flexibility but the practice of exclusion over one of inclusion does not and will not of course address the overall imbalance within the calendars between clergy and laity and men and women, whereby the latter of the two groups are grossly under represented.

### **On the daily Office**

Jeremy Taylor wrote, 'ordination is a collation of holy graces of sanctification; of a more excellent faith, of fervent charity, of providence and paternal care: gifts which now descend not by way of miracle, as upon the apostles, are to be acquired by human industry, by study and good letters'. This notion of necessary industry, particularly around reading, is here added to the grace of God that we have received and is a vital ingredient when we come to reflect on the spirituality of those of us in ministry. In Hauser's more contemporary words, 'the challenge of priestly spirituality is to develop rhythms of living in tune with the Spirit so that the Spirit can animate each aspect of priestly identity and transform the priest into a truly effective person-symbol of Christ'. Now the holiness spoken of here has both an institutional and a personal aspect, the objective holiness of the Church balancing and being fed by the subjective holiness of the individual.

And while much of this applies to the laity as well it is good to remember that we stand nearer, in Medard Kehl's words, to 'the Church's objective sources of holiness...so the



more they are obliged to make their lives like, and ready for, the objective holiness which they serve, which they protect'. So the obligation on the part of the clergy to some kind of daily prayer, some kind of daily connecting to the vision and grace extended to us emerges then here not so much as an ascetical discipline but as a practical safeguard. For God has an idea and a call for each one of us which involves some sort of intimacy with and participation in the divine and while to realise this idea is every Christian's highest goal it is a particular invitation for the clergy.

Reading lies at the heart of the practise of saying the Office and Pierre Hadot speaks of reading as a spiritual exercise and comments that, 'we have forgotten how to read: how to pause, liberate ourselves from our worries, return into ourselves, and leave aside our search for subtlety and originality, in order to meditate calmly, ruminate, and let the texts speak to us...As Goethe said: "Ordinary people don't know how much time and effort it takes to learn how to read. I've spent eighty years at it, and I still can't say that I've reached my goal."' Marcel Proust goes further and speaks of the act of reading in terms of friendship. Friendship, like reading, can have the aspect and character of a purely human experience or, on the other hand, it can be one of the key Christian virtues and both open us to influence by the mind and heart of the other. Friendship and its resulting intimacy have been spoken of as one of the hall-marks of any proper Christian maturity and the word itself shares the same root as the word freedom, another central Gospel value. So the daily recitation of the Office may well then be best cast as an integral part of a process of befriending: the Office enabling the further and on-going befriending of Scripture, of oneself, of one's vocation and of God - as well as the means of the further and on-going befriending by God himself.

Cranmer's 3<sup>rd</sup> exhortation at Holy Communion in the BCP contain the words – 'then we dwell in Christ and Christ in us; we are one with Christ and Christ with us'. This on-going and increasing conformity to Christ reminds us as well that prayer and the use of Scripture is not then just intended to be informative but transformative, and this process of transformation may at times challenge or be uncomfortable for us

Catherine Pickstock argues that the whole task of liturgy involves the act of praise that is itself 'dispossessing'. This 'dispossessing' is an appropriate losing of the sense of ego self which involves a lowering of defenses and a relinquishing of habitual patterns, so ultimately involving a certain personal as well as communal 'ungating'. This 'ungating' of

course underlines liturgy's capacity for creative transformation but stresses the vulnerability required for our whole selves to be open to be received and graced by God. Discipline is part of what defines an Office not just because of its place in Canon Law but because from the earliest centuries the daily offering of prayer was an integral part of what defined the Church and was how its individual members enabled the regular sacrifice of praise to God, which fulfilled the perpetual daily sacrifices of the Old Testament. The daily discipline of prayer was therefore a matter of communal and personal identity, achieved in offering and sacrifice, as well an invited free response to the call from God.

This will inevitably involve an act of will, choice and commitment over time involving both effort and industry, rather like the investment we make in the relationships, such as friendships, and in the activities that are really important to us. Of course graced affective moments will come, when the prayer seems rich and fruitful, but these are side benefits not the main purpose. Myriad benefits will be revealed over time but may not be apparent in the short term, which is why an interplay of duty with joy is required. For to say the Office will not always appear to be meaningful or fruitful. William Perri comments that, 'empty prayers, the empty discipline, and the empty life can be symbolically meaningful as signs of the messianic, prophetic, and sacrificial roles' that comprise the vocation to ministry in the Church.

Evelyn Underhill also commended 'the faithful repetition of appropriate acts that can deepen our understanding of the realities they are intended to convey' and even 'the monotony of these repetitions' can enable the soul to open out 'with increasing serenity on unlimited perspectives, felt rather than analysed, which converge on God.' But while notions of discipline in prayer may not be presently fashionable, set free from misconceptions or an overly narrow or legalistic perception elements of freedom and of joy can appropriately be balanced by an equally necessary sense of duty and obligation. The Office stands at the nexus of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, with the Church, the body of Christ, and with the individual priest or member of the clergy. Moreover not only does the Office stand at this nexus it is also one of the prime means by which the process of integration and sanctification is carried forward. The rationale for the daily Office has been variously understood over time as a liturgical re-enactment of the life of Jesus, the offering of the Church, the sanctification of time and the on-going formation of the individual and here all these combine. As Oliver Davies puts it, the Christian

Scriptures teach us that the world is irreversibly permeable to the power of God but that is only appropriated by ourselves 'in our still reversible participation in Christ'. The Office enables, deepens and stabilises that still reversible participation.

The contemplation of the Office is on more than one kind of word and embraces scripture, our life experiences and the needs of others; but all are part of the word, the word spoken to us and the word seeking to be spoken through us. What the Office possesses in potential and, over time in actuality, is the enabling of the movement from text and the act of reading through friendship to encounter towards contemplation and transformation in an increased identification with the word made flesh and in bearing fruit in ministry. Moreover it should be remembered that the goal and focus here is not intimacy with God as an end in itself nor in more enjoyable experiences in prayer; the goal is apostolic and must remain focused on the doing of the Father's will and the building of the kingdom of his son. So in the prayer of the Church we are invited in freedom to witness afresh to the life of Christ, offered anew each day by us in prayer and within us in our daily living and in our daily ministering.

### **Conclusion**

What might you be left with now? Embracing what you already do – maybe as before, maybe with an enhanced appreciation of its structure and purpose? Or planning to change and adapt your pattern of prayer or its contents in the light of this paper. Either way thank you for your commitment of time and attention in reading and reflecting.